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ARMS FOR DESPOTS
AND
THE POWERLESSNESS OF PUBLIC OPINION

University of Tampere
School of Social Sciences and
Humanities
Master's Degree Programme in
Peace, Mediation and Conflict
Research / History
Master's Thesis
November 2014

University of Tampere

School of Social Sciences and Humanities

Master's Programme in Peace, Mediation and Conflict Research

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Master's Thesis, 108 pages, two appendices

November 2014

Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the influence of public opinion on unpopular but marginal policies in democratic systems. I devise a simple game theoretical model representing the strategies of government and opposition concerning such a policy. Then I test this model against the contemporary case study of German arms exports into the MENA region in 2011. To this end, I qualitatively study official government and parliamentary sources as well as certain media actors' coverage to determine both political parties' and the media's impact on the debate. The putative willingness of the federal German government to export main battle tanks to Saudi Arabia during the uprisings in the MENA region caused an outcry in the German media and public. While the opposition used the opportunity for thorough criticism, it was largely inactive on the topic prior to the federal elections in 2013. The model is able to explain this difference. Both government and opposition are unlikely to problematise a policy that yields a gain for them but that is unpopular with the electorate. Although a majority of voters dislikes the policy it does not impact on voting decisions because it is marginal to almost all voters. The finding holds even under the assumption of voters making their voting decisions retrospectively. This armistice between relevant political parties constitutes a Nash equilibrium and can effectively prevent unpopular but marginal policies from modification. It shows the difficulty of making the government resolve a hugely unpopular yet minor issue, rendering public opinion effectively powerless. While the media is not identified as an effective corrective, further research on the possibilities of civil society to influence political parties is recommended. Equally, it should be possible to identify similar issues and test the model in other democratic polities.

Key words: Arab Spring, arms exports, democracy, game theory, interest group, media, political party, public opinion, retrospective voting

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time; but there is the broad feeling in our country that the people should rule, continuously rule, and that public opinion, expressed by all constitutional means, should shape, guide, and control the actions of Ministers who are their servants and not their masters.”

WINSTON CHURCHILL, on the 11th of November 1947

Democracy is a form of government held highly by both those societies practicing it and those who seek to attain it. Wars are fought in its name and even undemocratic dictatorships seem to at least see an advantage in claiming the term for themselves. However, democracy is not without flaws. More malevolent comments imply that democracy, the rule by the people, in practice often deteriorates into a system in which the people merely vote every few years but otherwise have little means of rule.

Regardless of one's opinion on said judgment, the electoral process certainly is a vital element of democracy. In it, every single member of an electorate is called upon to cast her or his vote. This is done in order to decide which coalition of candidates and parties may constitute the government until the next elections. Casting one's vote based on one's own self-interest may be an obvious strategy. However, it is but one possible strategy upon which any single voter may cast her or his vote. What is more, how is a voter even to amass the information necessary to make a well-founded decision about whom to give her or his vote to? One strategy that was suggested here as opposed to mere comparisons between candidates' campaigns and thus their announcements for the future is *retrospective voting*. Retrospective voting describes the phenomenon of founding one's voting decision on the candidates' performance in the past. Elections, at least when referring to 'large' elections such as national and federal ones, are not held on the question of which single candidate will have to deal with which single issue. Instead they are held on candidates' platforms with a combination of suggested policies for several, single issues. Thus it is likely that a voter will have to find her or his priorities among the issues at hand as

issues differ in their respective saliency to any given voter. Voting on a bundle of issues is called *bundled voting* and is bound to happen in any major governmental election.

SAARI and SIEBERG have shown that a bundle of policies may still withstand a vote although it contains a policy that no one prefers. They point to the fact that politicians are aware of this fact and the potential for exploitation that comes with it. Exploitation happens by bundling a desired but unpopular policy with more popular issues.¹ This will ensure the unpopular one withstanding the vote as part of the bundle (Saari, Sieberg 2001). This seemingly simple insight is of major importance to democratic elections. It can be combined with the notion that policies do not only differ in their popularity with the electorate but also in their saliency to it. From this combination I derive the main question addressed in this thesis: can a government ever be made to change a policy that is unpopular but marginal? This question includes two more assumptions: First, since there is usually an incumbent government that seeks reelection the question contains the term *government* instead of *candidate*. Second, it is assumed that a post-electoral change in the government coalition may relatively easily change an unpopular policy. Thus the question deliberately focuses on changing the incumbent governmental coalition's view, or at least the view of its dominating party that is, on that unpopular policy.

In order to conduct a game-theoretical analysis of the considerations accompanying such an unpopular policy, a range of relevant players are identified. This range of players is subsequently applied in a contemporary case study. The first player (P_1) to consider is the coalition in power which seeks to continue its unpopular policy, for whichever reasons, into the next legislative term. If there is a coalition of parties in power, coalising parties may have to be considered separately to a certain extent. Altogether the question of how unitary an actor effectively is, has to be addressed. The second player (P_2) is the parliamentary opposition which may or may not have a conflicting view on that unpopular issue compared to P_1 . Again, different oppositional parties may have to be considered separately and the degree of unity of the players needs to be problematised. As a third player (P_3) the media are considered. P_3 is important as a conveyor of information to the electorate. However, interpretations of the media's role between issues and audience differ greatly and need to be assessed. Moreover, if P_3 has its own agenda surpassing the mere altruistic spreading of information to the population in need of it, it is very unlikely to be a unitary actor as well. The fourth player (P_4) is probably the least unitary actor. Here interest groups are considered, including all kinds of non-governmental groups seeking to exert influence on political decision-makers. Finally, the fifth player (P_5) is the electorate, the part of the population which is allowed to vote and is thus relevant to elections.

I will then apply these theoretical considerations to my case study, a short rundown of which will now follow. In December 2010 a series of events was sparked which quickly became commonly known as the *Arab Spring*. I refer to these events the MENA uprisings.² Some of these uprisings or their consequences are still ongoing,

¹A 'popular' policy shall be defined here as a policy which is able to exact agreement by a more or less considerable majority of the electorate. Accordingly, a policy shall be defined as 'unpopular' if no more than a minor share of the electorate finds itself in agreement with that policy.

²Since the term *Arab Spring* is sometimes contested among experts, I will replace it with a more neutral term. The term I suggest contains both the defining events (uprisings) as well as their location, the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. Although the MENA region is largely congruent with the *Arab world*, I avoid the judgmental term *spring* which suggests a development of the region by the events in question that is desirable from a certain, *Western* perspective.

while some have been resolved and others have never gained true momentum in the first place. Regardless of complex repercussions in the international community's deliberations on those events, *Western nations* may be described as generally supportive of the liberal protesters in many of those countries. The protesters usually sought and in some cases managed to overthrow their ruling regimes, which had often been marked by the same rulers in office for decades. The protests in Libya and Syria turned into civil wars while they sometimes only closely missed to do so in the case of Egypt. In the face of years of authoritarian conduct, the violation of human rights and often severe nepotism and corruption, protesters aimed at replacing their regimes with more liberal, even democratic political systems. In the midst of these partly violent protests, German media began in July 2011 to report on a purported high profile arms trade between German companies and Saudi Arabia. These reports triggered strong reactions in parliament, media and society. On the one hand this was due to the role the Saudi Arabian ruling house had played in the MENA uprisings. On the other hand it was due to the German federal government's necessary and alleged approval of the deal. Despite heated debate, the issue lost in coverage soon. This pattern since repeated in light of similar reports about German arms exports to regimes of similar reputation. However, prior to the federal elections of September 2013, no major party chose to make the topic an important issue during campaigning. In consequence, the issue did not seem to make an impact as a matter of voters' retrospective voting decision. I argue that arms exports to authoritarian regimes fulfill the description of an unpopular but marginal policy.

The thesis is structured as follows: in section 2 I offer a general review of game theory in regard to democracy. In addition I reflect on why I deem it valuable for the case study at hand. I also provide a review of the literature on retrospective voting. In section 3 I consider the players relevant to my thesis and model the games between the most important players, the government and the opposition. Based on ideas derived from the literature, I identify their strategic considerations and respective outcomes. I address additional questions such as players' unity and differences between campaigning and non-campaigning times. In section 4 I shortly review the source material I selected for the case study. In preparation of the case study I illustrate the historical context in section 5. In doing so, I provide a concise depiction of the MENA uprisings to the extent that the German federal government was concerned. Then I present the July 2011 debate surrounding the purported arms trade with Saudi Arabia in parliament and selected media in section 6. I will use the model devised in section 3 to show that in the current constellation, the behaviour of the German government is perfectly rational. This judgment holds regardless of however one judges the government's policy from a moral point of view. In section 7 I will analyse election year 2013, equally with a focus on the German debate on arms exports into the MENA region. After providing a short overview of the election's aftermath I will present my comparative conclusion on the years 2011 and 2013 in section 8. Leaving the range of my case study, I am able draw further conclusions which reach well beyond the German scenario at hand.

Chapter 2

Theoretical basics

2.1 Game theory and democracy

“Democracy generates the appearance of uncertainty because it is a system of decentralized strategic action in which knowledge is inescapably local.”

ADAM PRZEWORSKI¹

This quotation sums up various assumptions of importance for this thesis. Those engaging in decentralised strategic action shall be called political actors. Their actions are decentralised since they are theoretically independent of each other in their decisions, regardless of what exactly such an actor is. They are strategic since actors mutually take the perceived and expected actions of other actors into consideration when devising their own strategy. Thus the individual independence of their decisions becomes limited. Knowledge is local, it is imperfect, hence better enabling some actors for expedient strategic action than others.

Why do political actors even have to engage in the system that PRZEWORSKI describes as one of uncertainty? Political actors do so because they are in competition, attempting to devise better strategies and subsequent actions than their competitors. I use the hardly helpful term *better* deliberately. A more appropriate one is the term used above, *expedient*. We can agree that in a democracy every citizen is free to engage or not to engage in politics, to vote or not to vote. I assume that any citizen who does engage has some preferred notions of where politics should lead her or his society in the future. Furthermore, democracy offers the possibility for any citizen to run for political office or not to run for political office. In said office that very citizen is subsequently able to try and implement policies in pursuit of held convictions. She or he becomes a political leader.

This leads to another basic assumption. In order to achieve any goal, any political leader is in need of holding political office (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2002). Thus, any given political leader has a natural incentive to do what she or he can to remain in office. One might grant an exception to the case when leaders wish to leave office for some reason. However, if a leader does not wish to do so, thus is still in pursuit of achieving

¹See Przeworski 1991, 12.

some goal, she or he will wish to stay in office. In a democracy this amounts to being reelected. BUENO DE MESQUITA ET AL. point to the importance of a political leader's *winning coalition* necessary for the leader to secure his tenure. As long as this coalition is satisfied the leader's tenure rests secured. In a democratic system the *winning coalition* consists of those voters which cast their vote in favour of a respective leader. Securing the allegiance of just enough voters to remain in office will make those voters the *winning coalition*. This is vital as it points to the eventual irrelevance of the electorate's remainder to that political leader's considerations. Here, these considerations mean plans as towards whose interests the leader shall gear her or his policies. The political leader has to decide as whose agent she or he shall act. The additional value of BUENO DE MESQUITA ET AL.'s concept lies in the fact that it reaches beyond the realm of democracy. Dictators and autocrats have and need a *winning coalition* just as political leaders in democracies do. They may not retain their agent in office by means of elections but they surely are vital in her or his survival in office.

In order to secure the coalition's support, the political leader must choose his policy projects accordingly. However, it does not suffice to bluntly act in this one group's interest, least so in a democratic system. A leader may alienate other groups comprising the electorate beyond indifference and into antagonism. It seems, maintaining the coalition indeed as a *winning coalition* will make other groups' antagonism obsolete. Yet in a democracy, a political leader holding office is necessarily faced not only with a coalition she or he has to maintain. The leader is moreover faced with competition which, in a democracy, may be called *institutionalised* competition. The competition of opinions and political actors is inherent to any genuinely democratic system. Thus competition is staged by other political actors seeking to become leaders. Such a competing political actor may try to and succeed in instrumentalising the antagonism of parts of the electorate which are not part of the incumbent's *winning coalition*. Hence, this competing political actor can unite these parts against the incumbent and form a more powerful - in a democracy, larger - winning coalition to end the incumbent's tenure in office.

This is the main reason why a political leader in a democracy must never be too biased in her or his favour for the *winning coalition* alone. The political leader chooses his policy projects strategically. In developing these strategies, the political leader tries to foresee both the electorate's as well as the competitors' reactions to his actions. Of course, the leader may be in the position of needing to react to these other actors' actions herself or himself. A successful political leader's deeds are never isolated from others, neither in the considerations they are based on nor in actions themselves. It is a reciprocal system of various political actors choosing their strategies and actions in consideration of other actors' perceived actions and strategies. Thus, a system with the "appearance of uncertainty", as PRZEWORSKI put it, for any single actor emerges.

The preceding paragraph sums up some of the very tenets of game theory. In terms of game theory I shall refer to participating actors as players. If any player P_1 is about to make a decision, that player will compare the different strategies available and the likely outcomes connected to each strategy. As P_1 is not necessarily the only player participating in a game, P_1 has to consider other players' actions as well. Another player, for example P_2 , will consider P_1 's strategies, when looking at own strategies and making subsequent decisions. In

short, for any P_x it is advisable to consider other players' outcomes and thus strategies and actions. Labeling a strategy as "advisable" of course presupposes that players act rationally, an important assumption of game theory (Morrow 1994, 7). This means any P_x is inclined towards choosing an option that will yield the best possible outcome given what the others are expected to do.

This short, schematic example quite obviously only introduces an ideally simple game of two players with simultaneous decision-making. It is very unlikely to live up to the possibly infinitely complex interdependencies in real-life scenarios. Still, game theory argues that even in games depicting real-life scenarios single decisions by players can be distinguished. In any case it seems to be a simplification of reality, a criticism that may easily be mounted against game theory. Yet, some simplification in order to make our overly complex reality more accessible can also prove to be rewarding. Any game theorist will also have to detailedly and transparently describe and reason with how players, strategies and subsequent outcomes were identified.

The feasibility of putting outcomes into definite and measurable terms is in need of further discussion. I can presuppose that all players participating in a given game measure their outcomes connected to any strategy in the same given unit of measurement. I can presuppose that this unit suffices for describing the payoffs of all given outcomes of the game. Such a unit may for example be money, or any single currency to be precise. A game with one unit to measure all outcomes occurring in the game obviously provides for a desirable degree of comparability and traceability. It is also a reason why laboratory games often work with monetary incentives for their subjects. Anyhow, regarding real-life scenarios and games based on them, this may again be an unlikely case.

Considering games taking place in the political processes of a democratic system, one can think of units of measurement other than monetary ones that might be needed. Some examples are voter turnout, amount of party members or actives and public approval or disapproval in surveys on certain issues. These are only the outcomes that can be counted in numbers and thus clearly measured. Combining and weighing different goods and thus units of measurement against each other seems far more challenging. Furthermore, outcomes can yield goods that cannot even be measured with existing units of measurement. The list of these seems endless. For example one can think of a player's satisfaction, be it moral or otherwise, feelings of patriotism or gains and losses in security. Here, the interpretability of terms such as *security* is not even considered yet. Thus, in complex scenarios even outcomes as such can be complex. If one does not succeed in depicting outcomes in measurable definite terms, one may still try to rank outcomes by appeal to any given player, by their *utility* to P_x .

Given the possible problems with the measurement of outcomes, the use of the terms *objective* and *subjective* demands clarification. Precisely measurable outcomes suggest P_x 's outcome yielding the best results for her or him as *objectively* the best one. However, if outcomes of P_x contain aspects that are not measurable in definite terms, a best outcome for P_x may rather be *subjectively* the best one. By this it becomes conceivable that players' rational behaviour, in which game theory puts considerable trust, does not necessarily reflect in a player's outcome and subsequent *utility* derived from it. Thus a premature focus on *objectively* best

outcomes may miss important parts of P_x 's outcomes and hence considerations. In fact, the simultaneous existence of both *objective* and *subjective* criteria for voting decisions by single voters and its impact on research design have been noted (Lewis-Beck, Stegmaier 2000, 186-188). It is comprehensible that the existence of both *objective* and *subjective* measurements shall be accepted for both pre-decision criteria and post-decision outcomes. Furthermore, it is reasonable to grant such measurements not only to members of the electorate but to any P_x involved in a game. Regarding the electorate, the connection between game theory as a whole and retrospective voting in particular becomes apparent. Obviously, the inclusion of *subjective* measurements is likely to increase the complexity of games played in already complex political scenarios of democratic societies. Yet it seems like the only possibility to be able to genuinely mirror P_x 's *utility*.

2.2 Retrospective Voting

The development of game theory owes very much to American academia. As it is a theory this is hardly of any further concern for its application. Yet, the development of and literature on *retrospective voting* also happens to be predominantly of Anglo-American and especially American origin. This results in the fact that much of the case studies presented in the scientific literature are conducted on scenarios hailing from American politics. Luckily, researchers try to abstract further reaching knowledge from their case studies. Hence, they not only advance the concept of *retrospective voting* as such. They also render their proceedings applicable to case studies more or less alien to the sphere of American politics.

Regardless of criteria and according measurements, *retrospective voting* is only one of many mechanisms on which a voter can base her or his voting decision. In a positive reading, retrospective voters consider an incumbent's past term when making their voting decision. Thus it provides them with additional information apart from only basing their decision on the incumbent's and the contestants' promises and plans for the future. However, more critically, *retrospective voting* has been assessed as a sign of naivety, evidencing a lack of analytical capabilities in voters towards the future. Accordingly, the counterpart *prospective voting* rather marks voters as sophisticated in that they are able to analytically draw conclusions about future developments (Lewis-Beck, Stegmaier 2000, 187-188). Then again, one might fault the deliberate neglect of available information in *prospective voting* when forming one's voting decision. Said information is retrieved by means of reviewing an incumbent's past performance.

SÖDERLUND names as a prerequisite of retrospective voting the electorate's focus on specific policy concerns. On these specific policies he points to the considerable explanatory power of perceived party performance (Söderlund 2008, 234). *Perceived* party performance indeed points to the inevitably at least partial subjectivity of any evaluation. In combination with a great degree of voter volatility, political actors are well-advised to be responsive to the electorate. Otherwise severe repercussions on the vote share obtained would have to be expected with the coming elections (Söderlund 2008, 236). This tendency of the electorate to vote retrospectively will make incumbents seeking to retain office act in the voter's best interest (Woon 2012, 927).

In line with the general research tradition of observing retrospective voting in response to economic issues, FELD and KIRCHGÄSSNER have conducted one of the few studies on retrospective voting in German politics. They found clear results that the grand matters *unemployment* and *inflation* had a negative impact on the *Kohl* government's popularity during the 1980s and 1990s. Opposition parties are the beneficiaries of said negative impact on the government in elections. In that sense, one might say, opposition parties even benefit from economic deterioration (Feld, Kirchgässner 2000²). Put in positive terms, the concept of *retrospective voting* argues that "voters give greater support to candidates of the incumbent party when the election is preceded by a period of prosperity than when times have been poor" (Kiewiet, Rivers 1984, 370). This can be read as a positive definition of the consequences of functioning *retrospective voting*.

Yet, one detail is indeed striking. Most of the studies searching for economic concerns among the voters allocating their votes retrospectively, are occupied with rather grand variables. An example is the study by FELD and KIRCHGÄSSNER cited above. Issues such as *unemployment* and *inflation* are indubitably important matters with possibly negative consequences for arguably most individual voters. Thus it seems only reasonable for voters to consider all information available on these issues when making their voting decision, hence to vote retrospectively. More inconspicuous issues are not commonly the main focus of studies on retrospective voting, let alone not strictly economic ones. Clearly, a retrospective voting decision cannot be made for every single issue. As political parties and candidates run on election platforms which address multiple issues, retrospective considerations of many issues would theoretically render a voting decision by the voter extremely difficult, if not impossible. In order to reach a decision a voter needs to have a hierarchy of concern. One issue outweighs another one. This is conceivable and only reasonable for any single voter to do. Nevertheless, an important possible consequence of this remains largely unaddressed. An issue that is of some concern to most voters but that is inferior in hierarchy to some other issue to most voters seems unlikely to have an effect on a retrospective voting decision. Political players are aware of this, bundling policies (Saari, Sieberg 2001), hence virtually excluding certain issues from the scope of retrospective voting. In fact, here retrospective voting seems to have a blind spot that renders the concern of most voters about a marginal issue uninfluential.

Regardless of this blind spot, the literature does furthermore point to politicians' awareness of their constituents voting retrospectively. Thus CHO identifies strategic interaction by policy-makers, considering each other's behaviour in decision-making and possible reactions by the constituents to which they are responsible (Cho 2009). In consequence, the possibility of retrospectively acting politicians is acknowledged as well. A retrospectively deciding policy-maker focuses her or his "future utility, reelection, maximization on [one's] own past electoral success, as opposed to the future-oriented focus of mirroring [one's] median constituent's preferences and ideology" (Ladewig 2010, 509). However, institutional conditions and the availability or non-availability of information on policy-makers' decisions is of vital importance in the manifestation of *retrospective voting* (Berry, Howell 2007). Despite the fact that LADEWIG's study is one of the many examples conducted in a US

²However, in a follow-up study on the early 2000s and the *Schröder* government, KIRCHGÄSSNER had to withdraw the conclusion of economic deterioration weakening the government's popularity and subsequent electoral results. See Kirchgässner 2009.

scenario, it seems indeed conceivable that politicians may also act upon retrospective considerations. It seems that both voters and political actors have an incentive to use as much available information as possible.

Hence, the availability of information is indeed a crucial factor in *retrospective voting*. Whichever actor provides information to the electorate plays an important role. The more different information channels are available, the less dependent the electorate is on information from political players' campaigning. The media are, however, likely to be players in their own right. Seeing them as merely altruistic providers of information would arguably miss out on vital aspects. Media actors as players shall be discussed in section 3.5.1. Of importance here is the following finding: with theoretically complete information about policy issues provided by media and other players the electorate is unable to miss out on more inconspicuous issues. Still, due to the decision on several issues, said issue could still happen to have no effect on electoral outcomes as voters may disregard it in comparison to more prominent concerns. Hence, *retrospective voting's* blind spot is theoretically maintained.

Chapter 3

Game theory applied: players and games

The entry quotation by *Churchill* holds that “the people should rule, continuously rule, and that public opinion, expressed by all constitutional means, should shape, guide, and control the actions of Ministers who are their servants and not their masters.” This is in line with the originary meaning of the term *democracy* as *rule by the people*. As the originator of all power in a democratic state, this interpretation should see the people being chosen as P_1 .

However, in the upcoming case study I will look into different player’s reactions to an unpopular policy pursued by the government. The government is a sovereign state’s primary executive organ which does not only pursue certain policies. It also enacts policies in the first place. Without the government enacting it, the entire debate surrounding an unpopular policy could not have ensued. Therefore, the government appears to be the obvious choice as the first player P_1 for this thesis’ proceedings.

First and foremost, I need to lay out the basic options that pertain to all players I will look at. I am discussing an unpopular piece of policy in relation to one or more other policies. I call this policy C . While other players can either support or oppose a policy, for the government supporting a policy is equal to enacting and pursuing it in the first place. The dichotomy of support and opposition subsequently applies as well to policy C . Hence D denotes the diametrically opposed alternative to C . In this case, it would be a far more popular alternative. The same dichotomy that holds for C and D shall hold for any other policy. Thus I let A denote the one view for that other policy and B the opposing view. Most people view this dichotomy as more important than the one between C and D . In the resulting bundle of policies, policy C and D are thus not only less prominent but moreover only one issue of many. In consequence, they may be marginalised in comparison to the dichotomy of A and B . Note that both dichotomies are not clear-cut, intermediate positions are possible.

The proceedings in the above paragraph build on work by SAARI and SIEBERG. They show that in bundled voting on at least two policy issues it is possible to end up with a voting result that contains a policy which a majority of voters dislikes. Of course, a bundle of only two policies is a somewhat ideally simple bundle. It is not likely to be encountered in reality, surely so in national elections in which candidates compete with supposed

policy solutions to a vast variety of issues. This is more evident when considering that national elections tend to take place in quadrennial or quinquennial rhythms. Surely more than one or two issues have arisen on which candidates need to take a stance. These can be depicted as E versus F , G versus H and so forth but are of no further concern here. In fact, the problem of ending up with a policy that a majority of voters dislikes, becomes even greater the more policy issues are included in the bundle (Saari, Sieberg 2001). However, for the case at hand the two dichotomies introduced in above paragraph are sufficient.

3.1 Government and opposition

3.1.1 P_1 – the government

In depicting the relationship between incumbent government and parliamentary opposition I will use the game theoretical model devised by GEDDES. Although she designed it for a different scenario, which is the description of reform processes in Latin American democracies between a major and a minor political party, her model is promising for my purpose (Geddes 1991). MORROW has reused it, noting its simplicity and applicability (Morrow 1994, 101). While I modify it to some extent I owe to above-mentioned scholars' works.¹ The model describes the effects on the probability of winning an election for a majority and a minority party by means of either supporting or opposing a certain reform. In my model, I will change the model by replacing majority and minority party by incumbent government and parliamentary opposition respectively. Furthermore, I will replace support and opposition to reform in the original model by popular policy alternative D and the unpopular policy C championed by the incumbent government. In a first case, my modified model then does not give the effects on the probability of winning an election. Rather, it gives the effects on the government's and opposition's reputation in the public. Of course these can have a subsequent influence on electoral results. Thus, in a second case, I will adjust my model to also represent the effects on the probability of winning an election.

While GEDDES' model is a constant-sum game, this is not necessarily the case for this modified model game. Losses in public approval for the incumbent government can of course be synonymous to gains for the parliamentary opposition, and the other way around. However, this does not need to be so. Said losses could also result in gains for oppositional parties not represented in the parliament or be lost for any political party at hand. Yet in my model I will simplify the situation by treating the scenario as a constant-sum game. Considering that the vast majority of votes is represented by the parties in parliament, I argue that it is acceptable to treat one player's loss as the other player's gain.

In explaining the selection of my variables for P_1 , the government, I first need to lay out a series of assumptions. These are 1) that a government expects some gain from every policy it pursues, 2) that each policy will reach the public sphere² and 3) that a government is aware of a certain policy's unpopularity a priori. The first

¹Similarities are most apparent in table 4.

²By the term *public sphere* I denote the abstract space in which the entirety of politically acting groups converse, where all P_x communicate and exchange. As HABERMAS notes, it is here that "[c]itizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion; thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and

assumption is that any government pursues any policy since it expects to achieve some benefit from doing so. This idea holds both for popular and unpopular policies. Thus, gains the incumbent government hopes to secure with its policy need to be addressed. I let g denote the government's *gain*, regardless of its exact manifestation and exact measurability. g may consist for instance simply of monetary gains, such as lobby funds. It can also consist of a more ideological and hence abstract good. A government may also find some gain in ensuring non-abstract gains for a third party. Yet as discussed in section 2.1 there are indeed manifold possibilities. g can also be a combination of various gains. Such gains are not necessarily easy to identify or apparent for other actors. Yet they are sure to exist. In any case, for a policy found to be unpopular it is safe to state that g does not consist in public approval, or disapproval for that matter.

For a policy to be effectively unpopular, logically, the public must be aware of its existence. This leads to the second assumption that said policy will reach the public sphere. In a functioning democratic system, leverage by the government to withhold delicate information from the public is very limited. P_1 may attempt an approach of secrecy, however, I assume it will ultimately fail.³ Other players which might undo any efforts by P_1 to cover up the pursuit of a potentially unpopular policy include the parliamentary opposition (P_2) and the media (P_3). This assumption presupposes means of control at the hands of the parliamentary opposition and a certain degree of freedom of press. In the German democratic system and by tendency in all democratic systems P_2 and P_3 command effective tools of control. The parliamentary opposition can take measures sanctioned by law to control the government's actions while the media enjoys a generally good state of press freedom.⁴ P_2 and P_3 are discussed in sections 3.1.2 and 3.5.1 respectively.

Granted, before enacting a particular unpopular policy it is of course conceivable that P_1 is not definitely aware of that policy's unpopularity. Yet the third assumption is that a well-endowed government commands means and ways or even simple common sense to estimate a future policy's likely reputation among the public a priori. With even more certainty, this can be stated for a policy that is not entirely new but merely a revised approach to a known issue. This finding does apply to my case study: the German arms industry is well-established and its products sought after internationally. Thus the issue to whom to allow the selling of these products and to whom not is not a new decision for a German executive to make. It did not come to the fore in recent years only.⁵ Hence, arms exports is not a topic the unpopularity of which could surprise the federal government. Arms exports cannot be a new policy. Rather, more arms exports and arms exports into certain

publicize their opinions freely"; see Habermas 2006, 103. As abstract as this may sound I do, however, stay clear of the term's wrongly idealised form which ignores its more specific origins and instead describes "some kind of utopian mass-democracy" which Louw identified in its contemporary use; see Louw 2010, 46. HABERMAS acknowledges that in contemporary mass welfare-state democracies the "public sphere [...] becomes a field for competition among interests in the cruder form of forcible confrontation"; see Habermas 2006, 106. Said finding well indicates the existence of several players in games of competition. See also McKee 2005.

³Admittedly, an approach of secrecy may succeed. Yet in this thesis' case study that is concerned with retrospective voting and the electorate's behaviour, a policy remaining secret would be of little value. The decision whether such an approach of secrecy will succeed or not is in any case not for P_1 to decide independently. This finding holds regardless of its exact implementation.

⁴According to the *Press Freedom Index* by non-profit organisation *Reporters Without Borders* the Federal Republic of Germany finished on places 17, 16 and 19 in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively. With 17 out of 100 points each, smaller figures indicating a freer press, results are overall favourable. The number of assessed countries in those years was 196, 197 and 197 respectively. See Freedom House 2011, 2012 and 2013.

⁵Exports of means of warfare have proven themselves to be a controversial and likely unpopular topic in Germany before. As the empirical part of this study shows, past controversies regarding German arms exports play a substantial role in the debate in focus here.

countries can mark a change of policy.

Assuming a government is able to know about a certain policy's lack of popularity a priori has great repercussions for the political process. Fearing public disapproval, a strategy for P_1 would be to desist from said unpopular policy immediately. Clearly, on the one hand, it will then not secure the gain g envisioned with the pursuit of that policy. It would be unrealistic on the other hand to expect some gain in, say, public approval for not pursuing it. The public cannot reward the end of a policy's implementation which was not pursued in the first place and, hence, the public never knew about. Either way, I expect P_1 to have a powerful incentive for pursuing the policy C at hand. Thus for it to chicken out preemptively is not a strategy to be discussed here as it seems hardly realistic.

3.1.2 P_2 – the opposition

In accordance with assigning the government to be P_1 I choose P_2 to denote the parliamentary opposition. The parties of the parliamentary opposition are the main alternative actors to constitute the government instead of whichever coalition is currently in governmental responsibility. If one regards the opposition to be a democratic government's main competitor it becomes obvious why it should be the next player in line to be discussed. After all, the mere name *opposition* makes the most of sense from the government's perspective.

It is reasonable to begin the discussion of P_2 with the aspect of its unity. This will become an important issue in the further discussion of P_1 . In the case of P_2 the matter of its unity is of great importance. I emphasise that to take office is not the aim of any actor that can be considered *political*. Yet it surely has to be the aim of any political party and individuals running as their candidates. Once in office, they wish to remain there (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2003). These two simple facts result in the competition between democratic parties. Other than possibly the government, the opposition parties do not need to form a coalition to work properly. As for campaigning, to prematurely announce a coalition and hence run on a joint platform would be potentially unreasonable. This finding holds equally for parties belonging to the parliamentary opposition as it does for parties currently belonging to government. Any party which commits itself to such a promise unnecessarily limits later options.

The fact that opposition parties do not need to form a coalition does not self-evidently mean they need to work against each other. The parliamentary opposition is supposed to control and criticise the government. Particular parties can reasonably do so individually or in conjunction. They may have the common interest of weakening the government. This can be achieved by means of damaging the government's public approval. After all, every bit of approval the government loses means a potential gain in approval for the parliamentary opposition parties. Yet shares of the electorate ending their support for the government may switch to the non-parliamentary opposition or non-affiliation with any party. In consequence, P_2 cannot be absolutely sure to gain approval from P_1 's disapproval. In reality, P_1 and P_2 are clearly not playing a constant-sum game for public approval. I consider that the shares of voters switching to non-parliamentary opposition or non-affiliation may be negligible. Then it may still come very close to a constant-sum game as which I consider it. I assume

this to be so in the case of the comparatively stable party system of Germany. Since its foundation in 1949 it has seen a mere six different political parties enter federal parliament. Two of these six are even sister parties which do not compete with each other in elections since they exist in different federal states. Undoubtedly, attacking the incumbent government over a certain policy may prove rewarding for the opposition parties. As the opposition parties do not form a coalition of any kind, P_2 is a non-unitary actor especially prior to elections. I will address this special and more complex situation later on. An overview of the relevant political parties in Germany can be found in section 4, table 4.1.

To begin with, possible views on policies that an opposition party can have, need to be qualified further. It seems that for any opposition party three basic qualifications can be conceived. It may be 1) approving, 2) indifferent or 3) disapproving towards any policy introduced by P_1 . Public disapproval, that is disapproval by considerable shares of the electorate, should be viewed as an additional qualifier. This is the case since the parliamentary opposition's and the public's approval and disapproval are eventually independent. The optimal case for the opposition in attacking the government would obviously be a policy of which itself and the electorate disapprove. Nevertheless, it is plausible that the opposition may not only have an incentive to attack the government over respective policy if this precondition is met. On the one hand, a party may side with the public against an unpopular policy while it actually is indifferent or even approving of said policy itself. Such a behaviour could be termed *populist*. On the other hand, a party may attack a policy by P_1 it genuinely disapproves of while the public's majority indeed is indifferent or even approving of it. Such behaviour could be called *genuine*. The latter event may be strategically very unwise. P_2 is well-advised to consider a policy's public standing when pondering whether to attack P_1 about it or not. As this thesis is concerned with an unpopular policy pursued by the government, I am either concerned with a populist parliamentary opposition or with a parliamentary opposition enjoying the optimal case of agreement with the public.

3.2 The game between P_1 and P_2 during non-election times

Presupposing my three assumptions regarding the government introduced above, information about the unpopular policy will enter the public sphere. The government can now choose to react to the release of its potentially unpopular policy to the public by maintaining support (C) or choosing to oppose it (D).

If P_1 chooses D it hopes to avoid negative repercussions it would suffer by choosing C . In doing so, it would, for one thing, forfeit g . For another thing, it may experience a range of unpredictable consequences c_1 .⁶ The government is likely to avoid damages to its public approval. Even more, the hypothetical case of the government choosing D while the opposition demands the unpopular policy C , adds to more positive consequences c_1 . However, the missing g and criticism by possible beneficiaries of the abandoned policy C may outweigh this prospect. Either way, the government's utility for D is $U(D) = c_1$.

⁶The distribution of c_1 is $F(c_1) = (-\infty, \infty)$. In other words, the outcome can vary from very bad to very good. $E(c_1) < g + a_1$ is likely to apply.

		Opposition	
		C	D
Government	C	$g + a_1$;	$g + a_1 - d_1$;
	D	c_1 ;	c_1 ;

Table 3.1: Federal government during non-election times

This table only presents the payoffs for P_1 . The according payoffs for P_2 follow in table 3.2.

If P_1 chooses C a range of different outcomes can occur, depending on how P_1 goes about the ensuing debate. First, by seeking public discourse, a government may try to change the electorate's opinion of such a policy. Of course, P_1 engaging in public discourse necessarily raises awareness for the topic. Thus it may make shares of the population aware and disapprove of the policy which did not care about it prior to discourse. Nevertheless, while it will fail with some, P_1 may manage to convince some critical minds of C . Consequently, there is both public approval to be gained and public disapproval to be suffered when engaging in public debate. For the government, success and failure of public debate is down to the respective shares of those, summarised in a_1 . P_1 will always enjoy g , complemented by possible effects on approval a_1 . If gains in approval are greater than gains in disapproval, their sum will result in an overall gain in approval for the government. If gains in approval are smaller than gains in disapproval, their sum will result in an overall loss of approval for the government. Note that a_1 is a negative figure $-a_1$ if the latter case applies. In addition, another player, the parliamentary opposition that supports D , can choose to attack the government over C . P_1 will then suffer further losses in approval, subtracting damage d_1 from the equation.

Second, if P_1 refuses debate it will still enjoy whichever gain g was intended with its unpopular policy. It furthermore accepts to suffer any public disapproval d_1 that arises from information about its unpopular policy spread by the opposition. Without P_1 attempting to influence the debate in its favour, this is inevitable. It seems very unlikely that the opposition will let an opportunity slide to attack the government over an unpopular issue C . Thus the opposition may also attack it in the case of the government's refusal of a debate. The equation for the government's utility in pursuing C , seeking public debate about it or not, is $U(C) = g + a_1$. If P_2 chooses D and hence opts to attack P_1 about C , it is $U(C) = g + a_1 - d_1$.

At this point, opting for D seems to make little sense for the government as it has the incentive to secure g . Possible damages a_1 because of C have been anticipated and judged worth risking. Thus prematurely abandoning it would be inconsistent. Moreover, the opposition could easily choose to exploit this apparent moment of weakness of the government. In consequence, c_1 is likely to be more harmful and more negative for P_1 than $g + a_1$. If P_1 resolved to pursue C it has to decide whether to debate the issue or to refuse debate in the face of public disapproval. Public debate or refusal of the same will influence the final value of a_1 .

With regard to the opposition I need to revisit the dichotomy of C and D . For the opposition, approval of the government's favored policy C is equal to also opting for C . If it chooses D , it disagrees with policy C

being chosen by the government. Indifference followed by inaction that results in not criticising the government for C would in consequence be equal to choosing C . Indifference followed by populist action to criticise the government for C would be equal to choosing D . In the end, the decision between C and D is made through action rather than through mere tacit opinion.

As discussed in section 3.1.1 I assume any policy devised by P_1 to enter into the public sphere. The parliamentary opposition may be somewhat less dependent on this event to gain knowledge about it. Through parliamentary debates and the likes it commands information channels closer to the government's decision-making processes than the overall public does. Notwithstanding this fact, it has an increased interest in choosing D and launching attacks on the government's choice of C if the public is able to witness. Accordingly, I will not consider a policy which only the government and the parliamentary opposition debate in isolation. In consequence I suppose that the most important achievement P_2 hopes to enjoy through debate is damage to P_1 's public approval. This is denoted by d_1 (compare table 3.1). Although it is not a positive one but rather a negative gain suffered by a competitor it is still valid as P_2 's main aim and hence necessary gain. This may seem somewhat destructive at first sight. Yet, as noted above, P_1 losing approval comes close to being a prerequisite for P_2 to gain any considerable approval for itself. Thus, gaining own approval is the parliamentary opposition's sufficient gain. This is denoted by a_2 .

Of course the government can anticipate the opposition's will to debate and criticise its policy C . It can thus opt to engage in public debate as well, rather than only be criticised. Such action by P_1 can have two different consequences. The government can regain some of its own public approval lost through the opposition's efforts, included in a_1 (compare table 3.1). Furthermore, it can damage the opposition's public approval, denoted by d_2 . To illustrate this, it would be unrealistic to assume that a party of the parliamentary opposition is infallible. Any established party – if it ever was in governmental responsibility – will have pursued an unpopular policy at some point. Possibly this policy may have even been similar to the one the opposition now criticises. This possibility is all the more conceivable if the unpopular policy in question does not concern an entirely new topic but is rather a mere change in policy. As noted in section 3.1.1 this applies for my case study. Both P_1 gaining approval and P_2 losing approval will turn out disadvantageous for P_2 . Alternatively, the government can desist from choosing C in the face of public criticism and instead choose D . The opposition that supports D as well cannot criticise the government anymore then for choosing popular policy D . In this case, the opposition's outcome is simply 0.

Opposite to choosing D and critical public debate of the government's policy C , there is a simpler option for P_2 . Just like P_1 it could refuse to engage in criticism against P_1 by also opting for C . Unless the government would unexpectedly seek debate, P_2 would neither lose nor gain anything, its respective payoff being simply 0. There is the hypothetical case of the government opting for popular policy D while the opposition demands unpopular policy C . This should almost necessarily turn out detrimental for P_2 , again denoted by damage d_2 . It is conceivable that supporting D and publicly criticising C , depending on the variables, may offer a payoff > 0 for P_2 which makes such inaction unlikely. Under normal circumstances the parliamentary opposition seems

		Opposition	
		C	D
Government	C	$g + a_1$; 0	$g + a_1 - d_1$; $a_2 - d_2$
	D	c_1 ; $-d_2$	c_1 ; 0

Table 3.2: Federal government and parliamentary opposition during non-election times

This table presents the payoffs for both P_1 and P_2 .

to be better off choosing D and debating, rather than silently supporting C through inaction.

Judging from above proceedings it seems most desirable for the opposition to choose D as a best response and criticise the government regarding its unpopular choice of C . The government's preference to refuse public debate about C to keep attention to it low may be known to the opposition. Such knowledge would only encourage it to criticise the government as counteraction seems less likely. The opposition hence does not run a high risk of suffering any negative repercussions from its criticism. Both these preferences for the government to remain passive and for the opposition to seek debate seem to be very stable. In fact, P_1 choosing strategy C and P_2 choosing strategy D amount to a Nash equilibrium (NE).⁷ ($C ; D$) being an NE holds because P_1 deems g worthy any damage that P_2 could inflict and thus prefers it over D . Equally, P_2 deems gains through D better than tacitly supporting C and gaining 0.

This conclusion suggests the special importance of campaigning times prior to elections. It is during these times that gains and losses in public approval for political parties may actually have longer-term effects by means of influencing election results. During non-election times, the government merely aims to retain public approval while the opposition seeks to enlarge its share. In the case of elections it will be needed to remain in office. When elections do take place, it aims to retain public approval to win the votes needed to remain in office. As I will discuss next, the situation of upcoming elections can entail changes for both players' best strategies.

3.3 Campaigning and players' reduced unity

Equal to the unity of P_2 before, the unity of P_1 has to be discussed as well. Note that a national government, such as P_1 is possibly comprised of a coalition of parties.⁸ In Germany this has always been the case since

⁷Although the notion of the NE is one of the central ones in game theory a short definition for readers unfamiliar with the topic is in order. Political scientist MORROW defines the NE very simply as "a situation where each player's strategy is a best reply to the other player's strategy." If both players react to their opponent's strategy with their respective best reply neither of them has the incentive to abandon her or his equilibrium strategy. See Morrow 1994, 80.

⁸Clearly, any party consists of a variety of individuals. Various individuals inevitably have a variety of opinions. These opinions are not necessarily compatible, especially if they concern the same issue. Such a player consisting of multiple individuals would be torn in its own decision-making process between differing opinions. Its ability to act would be hampered and its unity forfeited. A government, however, tends to be comprised of high-ranking members of political parties. In the easiest constellation there are a head of government and a differing number of ministers. One should assume that they agree in the essentials of their views. If some members of a cabinet disagree on a matter it may be up to the head of government to restore unity. Otherwise a government should be expected to be able to reach consensus in internal deliberations. In this way, a government can retain an effective

the Federal Republic's inception. Obviously, two or more coalising parties potentially differ in their political views more than high-ranking members of only one political party do. Still, parties allying in a coalition tend to be politically closer to each other than to other parties of a country's political spectrum. Apart from that, in the German case, political parties usually sign a coalition contract when forming the coalition prior to the beginning of their tenure. This contract records agreed policy guidelines. Negotiations for such a contract can easily take several weeks, as happened last in autumn of 2013. Overall, I assume that this contract and other arrangements between coalition partners maintains a high degree of unity between them. Thus the question whether a cabinet is comprised of only one political party or several parties should not have an overly great impact during the legislative period.

This may differ when elections draw closer. Different political parties may be in different situations prior to elections. Hence they may evaluate differently what their best strategy is to secure as many votes as possible. I assume that every political party fends for itself. It is possible that a party states which other party would be its preferred coalition partner. Anyhow, it seems difficult to conceive that two different parties run on a completely identical and thus joint platform. It would not only make nonsense of the reason why different political parties exist. Parties joining platforms and hence running as a coalition would needlessly limit their own options after the elections for forming other coalitions. Besides they would give away the chance to elaborate their own profile opposite other parties and steal votes from each other. In summary I assume that differences between two or more political parties which are presently governing in a coalition will come to the fore prior to elections. This does not result in a governing coalition's inability to act in the weeks of campaigning which precede elections. It may, however, somewhat weaken the coalition's unity, that is render visible distinct party positions.

In times of elections, however, not only the governmental parties aim to retain office. Equally, the parties of the parliamentary opposition aim to take office. To this end, simply attacking the incumbent over every possible issue in disagreement may be shortsighted, however desirable it may be in times far from campaigning. Risking counteraction and thus setbacks to its own public standing may make such action inadvisable. The essential difference between government and opposition during campaigning comes to the fore: P_1 seeks to keep its held position. P_2 seeks to capture that very position. P_1 seeks to secure the status quo. P_2 seeks to change it. The latter thus needs to make more complex assessments.

As discussed above, I assume that even those political parties which form the governing coalition will fend individually. This finding holds to a yet greater degree for the parties of the parliamentary opposition. After all, they do not even form a coalition in the first place. Hence it is rewarding to look at different players here as well.

decision-making ability. By presupposing this, I treat a single party as one unitary actor as integrating individual opinions in my analysis would be overly complex and thus impractical.

3.4 The game between P_1 and P_2 during election times

In order to present these differing positions within P_1 I only need to introduce one new factor. I let $P_{1.1}$ denote one party of the governing coalition and $P_{1.2}$ its other party. Both will get reelected and continuously come to enjoy g with probability $\alpha_{1,x}$.⁹ The probability $\alpha_{1,x}$ is a function of the amount of voters that have the preferences (A,C) and (A,D) . Those preferences include simply all voters preferring A over B .¹⁰ As I stated above, the dichotomy of A and B is more important than that of C and D . The effects on public approval a_1 and d_1 have an influence on the probability as well. It is thus $\alpha_{1,x}(v(A,C), v(A,D), a_1, d_1)$.¹¹

Returning to an unpopular policy in discussion, suppose coalition party $P_{1.1}$ sees its public approval in secure levels. It thus sees itself in position to continue to gain g after elections have taken place because it will remain in office with probability $\alpha_{1.1}$. Consider that $P_{1.1}$ supports policies C and A whereas P_2 supports B . Thus the preference settings of (A,C) and (A,D) will make the respective voters want to vote for $P_{1.1}$. The approval effect of a_1 and d_1 for pursuing C may have a negative but not critical influence on $\alpha_{1.1}$. Yet $P_{1.1}$ is prepared to suffer any possible damages to its public approval which may follow from this approach.

$P_{1.2}$, however, may be less confident about its chances to remain in government and continuously earn g . Consider that it does not as perfectly promote A as many voters prefer it. It additionally may not expect to secure enough votes in combination with the unpopular C . The small value it attaches to $\alpha_{1.2}$ can then in combination with effects on public approval $a_{1.2}$ and $d_{1.2}$ render a change of policy attractive. Such a coalition party may opt to distance itself from C to avoid the damages $a_{1.2}$ and $d_{1.2}$ and the lowered chance of reelection that comes with them. The possibility of avoiding public disapproval or even gaining some additional public approval weighs heavier on $P_{1.2}$ than rather improbably gaining g . Of course, by choosing D , $P_{1.2}$ will then have to accept unpredictable consequences c_1 . These can either be negative, for example severe disturbance within the coalition, or they can be positive, even enabling $P_{1.2}$ to remain in office, however unlikely that event may seem. The decision to desist from an unpopular policy C by opting for D would reasonably be accompanied by the decision to seek public debate. The reason for this would be to increase public knowledge of this presumably popular decision. Under these circumstances it can be a promising option for a weakened government party to desist from C and to opt for the incalculability of D and subsequent c_1 instead. This makes sense for $P_{1.2}$ if it assesses any damage to public approval through C to be too much to manage.

Suppose P_2 has a certain probability of being voted into government, effectively transforming it into (part of) P_1 . The question whether it would be a coalition or a single-party government is not relevant. The opposition then has an incentive not to act in ways during campaigning that might prove detrimental to its own standing in government later on. As a party to government P_2 would then possibly come to enjoy g . Recall that g is the incentive for which the incumbent government had enacted the unpopular policy C in the first place. It is possible that the opposition, once in power, would wish to benefit from those same benefits represented by g .

⁹Thus $x=(1,2)$ applies.

¹⁰SAARI and SIEBERG provided the basis for these and the following considerations regarding policy preferences. See Saari, Sieberg 2001. For background details on two pairs of alternatives see here especially pages 417-420.

¹¹Such that $\frac{d\alpha_{1,x}}{dv(A,C)} > 0$; $\frac{d\alpha_{1,x}}{dv(A,D)} > 0$; $\frac{d\alpha_{1,x}}{da_{1,x}} > 0$ if $a_1 > 0$ and < 0 if $a_1 < 0$; $\frac{d\alpha_{1,x}}{dd_{1,x}} < 0$ apply.

3.4. THE GAME BETWEEN P_1 AND P_2 DURING ELECTION TIMES

		Opposition	
		C	D
Government	C	$\alpha_1(g + a_1)$;	$\alpha_1(g + a_1 - d_1)$;
	D	$(1 - \alpha_1)c_1$;	$(1 - \alpha_1)c_1$;

Table 3.3: Federal government during election times

This table only presents the payoffs for $P_{1.x}$. $P_{1.1}$ and $P_{1.2}$ take their decision individually. The according payoffs for $P_{2.x}$ follow in table 3.4.

A stark contradiction between the opposition's support of D during campaigning and support of C thereafter can be considered a weak point. It is a weak point in the sense that it may be exploited by political adversaries in the future. To whichever end it may be exploited, be it damages to public approval or a perceived lack of credibility in the public, it is not desirable for P_2 . Any opposition party will seek to avoid such a situation. The probability of P_2 being elected into office is denoted by $\beta_{2.x}$. Suppose furthermore that the opposition supports the main policy B as opposed to A promoted by the government. Then probability $\beta_{2.x}$ is a function of the voters with the preferences (B, C) and (B, D) , influenced by a_2 and possibly d_2 . It is thus $\beta_{2.x}(v(B, C), v(B, D), a_2, d_2)$.¹²

When considering the opposition's strategies during campaigning, I assume that the government now has the incentive to counterattack the opposition if it provides a target. There is no reason why the government should suffer d_1 and let the opposition possibly even enjoy a_2 now that it might count into actual election results. By means of counterattacking through public debate it may repair some damage done and in return inflict some damage d_2 on P_2 . If the opposition does not offer a target, the government will rather take the damage than unnecessarily increase publicity for its unpopular policy C .

Now regard a player $P_{2.1}$, an opposition party with realistic prospects of achieving governmental responsibility, thus having a relatively large value for $\beta_{2.1}$. The much simpler alternative for this party would be not to criticise the government on grounds of its unpopular policy C at all. The incumbent government is likely to be satisfied with not debating C , effectively leading to a truce between the parties. In game theoretical terms, such a change of $P_{2.1}$'s strategy would amount to a change of the game's NE to $(C ; C)$, at least so between $P_{1.1}$ and $P_{2.1}$. It would also mean that $P_{2.1}$ would effectively support C , concluding an armistice on the matter with $P_{1.1}$. $P_{2.1}$ would then simply be left with probability $\beta_{2.1}$ of being voted into government and enjoying g . Thus it is advisable by the same probability to not attack the government about C . It would mean for $P_{2.1}$ to forego the opportunity of criticism against P_1 for effectively three reasons: First, $P_{2.1}$ avoids the risk of incurring its own damages to public approval $d_{2.1}$ and thus election results around the issue of that certain policy. Second, $P_{2.1}$ avoids later punishment for not remaining true to its criticism. Third, $P_{2.1}$ secures g . Again, there is the hypothetical case of the government desisting from its policy and choosing D . $P_{2.1}$ is then left with the

¹²Such that $\frac{d\beta_{2.x}}{dv(B, C)} > 0$, $\frac{d\beta_{2.x}}{dv(B, D)} > 0$, $\frac{d\beta_{2.x}}{da_{2.x}} > 0$ if $a_2 > 0$ and $\frac{d\beta_{2.x}}{dd_{2.x}} < 0$ apply.

		Opposition	
		C	D
Government	C	$\alpha_{1.x}(g + a_1) \quad ; \quad \beta_{2.x}g$	$\alpha_{1.x}(g + a_1 - d_1) \quad ; \quad (1 - \beta_{2.x})(g + a_2 - d_2)$
	D	$(1 - \alpha_{1.x})c_1 \quad ; \quad \beta_{2.x}(c_2 - d_2)$	$(1 - \alpha_{1.x})c_1 \quad ; \quad (1 - \beta_{2.x})0$

Table 3.4: Federal government and parliamentary opposition during election times

This table presents the payoffs for both P_1 and P_2 respectively. The opposition players $P_{2.1}$ and $P_{2.2}$ take their decision individually.

probability $\beta_{2.1}$ of being voted into government and enjoying consequences c_2 . Being voted into government should be positive but c_2 is ultimately a gamble. It does not include g . In the process of supporting unpopular C while the government decided to oppose it, $P_{2.1}$ will also again suffer a damage $d_{2.1}$.

Obviously, an opposition party $P_{2.2}$ can also have low prospects of achieving governmental responsibility and coming to enjoy g . This event is indicated by a small value for $\beta_{2.2}$. It has no realistic prospects of achieving governmental responsibility. Without these prospects for governmental responsibility and earning g after elections, such an opposition party has no reason to show restraint in critically debating C during campaigning. For $P_{2.2}$, refusing critical debate in the public by choosing C would at best simply amount to an outcome of 0. $P_{2.2}$ then has a greater incentive to choose D and seek public debate, even if this means suffering $d_{2.2}$. Thereby it can still possibly influence public opinion in its own best interest.

In the campaigning scenario, a governmental party with good prospects of remaining in government is not likely to change its strategy of pursuing unpopular policy C . A governmental party, however, that is desperately in need of additional votes may try to opt for the more popular option D instead. During campaigning, an opposition party with high hopes for future incumbency may opt to desist from critically debating C . With such a choice it would effectively support C through inaction and avoids later repercussions. An opposition party without such a promising perspective does not need to show such restraint. It will hence choose D and criticise the government's choice of C , counting on the government's likely unwillingness to publicly defend it. Since the parliamentary opposition is not a unitary actor, it will be important to try and identify both cases in the empirical study.

In consequence, $P_{1.1}$ may wish to play the NE ($C ; C$) with $P_{2.1}$ while it would possibly like to counteract $P_{2.2}$'s criticism with strategy D . Logic demands that this is not possible. $P_{1.1}$ can only choose one strategy as a reaction to all $P_{2.x}$'s strategies. This means that it might endure criticism from $P_{2.2}$ for the sake of maintaining the NE armistice with $P_{2.1}$.

3.5 Other players

3.5.1 P_3 – the media

The media are a more diverse player to investigate than the federal government or the parliamentary opposition. While I have noted that the two former ones are not necessarily unitary actors depending on the situation, disunity will predominantly occur within a manageable circle of political parties. Apparently, the *media* are a vast collective of various individual actors. Possibly all of them possess their own agenda even if these should only differ by nuances at times. Obviously, any media actor consists of individual employees, each with own opinions. Anyway, I assume a single media actor to be a unitary actor, a status that is maintained for example by its editors. Hence a media actor can have and act according to political and other affiliations.

The literature suggests a distinction between media in the domestic and foreign policy domains. In consideration of this thesis' focus I will base my discussion on the latter. LOUW finds that foreign policy-makers “can generally assume that their mass citizenries will be almost completely reliant on the media for information about the successes, failures and effects of their policies in far away places” (Louw 2010, 184). In fact, to cover current events and to spread information about them, collected from a variety of sources, is the essence of why the media exist. Investigative journalist GOODMAN supports this conclusion by statements such as that “[t]he media have the responsibility to bring us the views of people all over the country and world.” Yet again, she furthermore suggests that the media do not always remain faithful to this original purpose, stating that “[t]he people who were excluded were not the silent majority. They were a silenced majority, silenced by the mainstream media.” (Goodman). Although critical, this finding supports the vital role the media possess in covering issues, albeit in a biased way. This makes a strong case for introducing the media as P_3 as they represent a necessary link between the decision-making processes of government and opposition on the one hand and the electorate on the other hand.

In the domain of foreign policy, LOUW identifies eight different, possible roles for the media. Some of them overlap but are distinct enough. It is vital to consider this enormous diversity if the media's payoffs are to be derived. First, the media can act as *consent manufacturers* in close support of the originators of foreign policy, the incumbent government. They will reflect disunity within the government. However, if unity exists to the extent that foreign policy can still be formulated the media will follow suit. It is very important to note that the notion of obedient media manufacturing consent for the powerful does not merely apply to authoritarian polities and dictatorships. Democracies can also be marked by a symbiotic relationship between the media and power (Besley et al. 2005). Second is the closely related reading of the media as *lapdogs*. This interpretation has its origins in marxist tradition and regards the media as a tool acting in the interest of the ruling class. In doing so, the media perpetuate class divisions and ultimately class society. A third interpretation sees the media as *watchdogs*. In this classical liberal view the media monitor the government's behaviour and independently formulate differing positions if necessary. It interprets the media as political actors in their own right. In a fourth reading the media are seen as providing alternative *diplomatic channels*. This view is more relevant for

inter-state issues and thus of little concern for the case at hand. Fifth, the media supposedly provide *morality plays* to the audience. Both originators of foreign policy and the public are influenced by moral considerations. Through acting and publishing accordingly, the media become a considerable force in the formulation of foreign policy. A sixth interpretation of the media engaging in *hype* sees foreign policy news as being intentionally made more sensational. Thus they might be over-interpreted and hence spill over into the domestic arena, possibly unreasonably so. This forces formulators of foreign policy to engage in media management themselves to counteract unreasonably hyped-up media coverage. In a seventh interpretation the media are regarded to be essentially *powerless*. Even if they do cover foreign policy issues, they have no relevant influence on foreign-policy formulation by policy-makers. Media *enmeshed in power struggles* constitute the eighth interpretation. In this reading, the media are used as a tool by competing factions of political actors, including interest groups. Since they are often lured to serve these certain groups' interests, they are nominally independent but not uninfluenced (Louw 2010, 184-191).

Which role one assigns to the media in the coverage of foreign policy has an enormous influence on aims and preferences one has to assign to them. All of the roles assigned to the media above presuppose a certain degree and kind of ideological bias. Apart from all things ideological though, any media actor has economic interests. As one of many competitors in a free market of media entrepreneurs, every $P_{3.x}$ needs to generate revenues to withstand competition. Revenues are generated by producing media output, that is coverage of topics. Private media actors are not government-funded and can, if deemed appropriate, thus cover the government in critical ways to secure revenues and future funding. This finding applies only somewhat less to government-funded media outlets. In a functioning democratic system, however, I assume government-funded media actors to be rather balanced in their coverage of topics. Hence I assume that it is always better for an individual media actor to cover an issue rather than to not cover it. This holds regardless of any political affiliations. The idea of revenues-driven pressure to cover an issue holds even more when considering peer pressure among media entrepreneurs.

Among other things, a satisfying status of press freedom suggests that a government cannot control the actions of domestic media. If only one single media actor opts to cover an issue, competing media actors may be prone to do so as well. By maintaining inaction they could forfeit an opportunity for securing revenues and instead strengthen their active competitor. Moreover, it possibly was one single $P_{3.x}$ which first brought an issue into the public sphere. This particular actor should be expected to have a particular interest in further covering this very issue since it may have an advantage vis-à-vis its competitors. It would then be in any individual media actor's interest to not leave the opportunity to cover the issue to that single peer. Individually all $P_{3.x}$ are thus better off by opting for coverage. However, media actors do have to compare an issue's salience as opposed to other issues. If it is deemed relatively unimportant in comparison, it will receive relatively low coverage. *Unimportant* can both mean unimportant to the audience or unimportant in the generation of revenues. This depends on whether a media actor's drive is ideological or economic.

The alternative would be a collective decision by all media actors to exclude a certain topic from cover-

age entirely. Following LOUW in his assessment of the media as the only possibility of the citizenry to gain information about its government's foreign policy, this would clearly amount to censorship. Considering the individual media actor's interest in covering an issue, this event, however, seems not realistic at present but rather dystopian. Although mere economic prudence alone points towards media actively covering an issue, there are possible gains other than monetary ones.

If one presupposes the media to be a *watchdog*, a media actor may draw non-monetary gain from, for instance, fulfilling its journalistic obligation. This may be a hardly measurable, very idealistic gain but as it was emphasised in section 2.1 subjective outcomes need to be considered as well. By fulfilling one's journalistic obligation I describe the coverage of an issue in objective and unbiased terms, as far as this is altogether possible. This accomplishment of an honest service to the public is a possible gain for $P_{3,x}$. Even if a media outlet should follow a distinctly biased agenda in its coverage, be it in favour of the political right, left or any other, it might derive some ideological gain from doing so.

If coverage is likely, what will it look like? So far I discussed a piece of policy C that is pursued by the government for one or more particular reasons. It is widely acknowledged by both the government and the opposition that C is unpopular among the public's majority. C and the government's pursuit of it will also inevitably reach the public sphere and thus the public's attention, the degree of which is in question though. This assessment shapes both players' handling of the policy as discussed above. Consider that the government is not confident about being able to communicate C in a favourable way. It thus prefers to keep it going unnoticed. Whether the media would be more confident with this task is not plain to see. It is conceivable that a policy has to be dealt with that simply cannot be put into wholly positive terms which would convince all critics. Given a sufficient degree of press freedom, many media actors may thus decide to take a critical stance on the policy at hand. The strength of criticism employed by each media outlet can of course differ according to political leanings.

These proceedings do point towards the ideal of a *watchdog* media. Yet even if critical watchdog media do point at the shortcomings and flaws of the government's policy, it is not guaranteed to change. Otherwise critical media would indeed very easily shape foreign policy. Anticipation of such coverage will only reinforce the government's preference to keep its policy C from considerable attention. It can also try to direct the media's attention to other issues, possibly ones that shed a more favourable light on the government. However, as noted before, the unpopular policy C and the attached issue completely missing the media's attention is not a realistic scenario. Following LOUW, I do indeed regard P_3 to be the necessary link between politics and public to inform the latter. Given that, a media not covering the problematic policy would not only disable the entire case. It would also not serve individual $P_{3,x}$'s interests.

Nevertheless, coverage by the media of an unpopular policy pursued by the government is not equal to disapproval of the same by the electorate. P_1 hence does not need to worry about coverage of C as such. The electorate still has to decide whether P_1 shall suffer consequences in elections triggered by its policy. As noted above, this choice is more heavily weighted by the voters' values for issues A versus B and by their subjective

priors regarding whether another party could offer a better combination. Media coverage is a necessary condition for this consideration to be possible. If coverage of an issue presents itself as a given in a democratic system, individual media actors need to be distinguished by other criteria.

Thus the analysis will identify a range of media actors in Germany. These will cover the mainstream political spectrum. By selecting certain instances of the policy being publicised, their coverage can be compared. This will be done in a qualitative manner. Both finding major differences or finding a high degree of homogeneity in their coverage over the political spectrums may prove useful. On the one hand, all media outlets under scrutiny could apply criticism of C regardless of political affiliation. If the government does or does not modify its policy, a respective conclusion on the media's influence on foreign policy formulation can be drawn. On the other hand, media outlets under scrutiny may not be equally critical of C and the government's pursuit of it. If they do show significant differences, it will shed a light on political bias in media coverage.

3.5.2 P_4 – interest groups

Under the term *interest groups* I sum up those societal groups which actively seek to influence political decision-makers. While doing so, they are explicitly distinct from the incumbent government (P_1) and the parliamentary opposition (P_2). Although this distinction may sometimes be blurred in reality – for example by a party politician being affiliated with a certain interest group – it is not blurred in theory.¹³ They are furthermore distinct from the electorate in that they do not merely react to government's actions in elections; instead, they try to have an impact on elections' outcomes. They do so by exerting influence throughout the legislative term. Individuals participating in interest groups are, of course, part of the electorate. However, these two qualifications of one individual need to be distinguished. In their position between political decision-makers and the electorate, interest groups may be most comparable to the media (P_3). I thus regard interest groups to be the fourth player, P_4 .

Interest groups, however, are far from being a homogenous player. The most important distinction, however, is not the question of support or opposition to a certain policy. Rather they can be divided into interest groups which 1) avoid the public in their effort of exerting influence on policy-makers and which 2) actively pursue inclusion of the public in this effort. The groups characterised by 1) are what would be classically considered *lobby groups*. In the case of an unpopular policy C it is likely that such interest groups are in favour of said policy. Simply put, why would an interest group seek to include the public in its campaigning for an unpopular policy? As they are aware of the policy's reputation just as the government favouring it is, they consciously try to maintain the separation of their efforts from public discourse. To this end, they have available favourable channels of access to the government. This means that representatives of the government and lobby groups have relatively ample opportunity to converse directly. In this environment, for example the eponymous lobby, a lobby group can work to advance the interests it represents, be they corporate or not. If they are indeed corporate interests, a lobby group can be assumed to be equipped with considerable financial means. This

¹³Towards the end of this thesis, more precisely in section 7.4, I will shortly revisit this question.

phrasing may sound somewhat tendentious. Thus it needs to be emphasised that this constellation does not necessarily amount to corruption and bribery happening between lobby groups and the government. It merely pays reference to the fact that financially well-endowed corporations can afford to employ professional full-time lobbyists to represent their interests. The situation regarding the amount of time that can be invested into lobbying is clearly different for those lobbyists commanding lesser financial backing. In summary, interest groups avoiding the public for the sake of direct dialogue with decision-makers tend to do so willingly. Such groups mainly do not seek public discourse because they do neither need public discourse nor do they need to influence the electorate. What is more, their interests may even be opposed to inclusion of the public. Clearly, they do not provide information to the public which sets them apart from the media.

More related in their function to the media are the interest groups characterised by 2). Such groups belong to *civil society*. They resemble the media in that they catalyse public discourse and thus facilitate the provision of information to the electorate. Obviously, motivations differ. While I consider that an idealistic media entrepreneur may – besides monetary revenues – theoretically aim for fulfilling its journalistic obligation by objectively informing the public, this finding cannot hold for interest groups. They pursue a particular aim, in the case of an unpopular policy C usually a modification of said policy, D . To this end, civil society groups seek, like lobby groups, to exert influence on the government's policy-making. Lacking the same budgets to effectively work the channels as lobby groups, they have to rely on other means. Instead they focus on mobilising the public to which an important step is information. Other than for an idealistic media entrepreneur, information of the public for a civil society group is hence a means and not an end in itself. Thus information provided by a civil society group is not necessarily any more objective than information provided by any biased media entrepreneur.¹⁴ It is rather a necessary step on the path chosen to seek influence on the government. By enhancing an unpopular policy's impact on the public, civil society groups enjoy a twofold benefit. First and most obviously it will serve their ends as just described. Secondly such an approach precisely counteracts the preference of lobby groups which would prefer to keep the public attention's away from the policy they seek to advance. Let me presuppose a somewhat clichéd scenario which pits *evil* corporate interests forwarded by lobby groups against *good* ethical concerns as represented by civil society. Then this approach has to be regarded as doubly advisable for the latter groups. Beyond cliché, lobby groups and civil society are likely to strive for contrasting interests, given the simple fact that their methodical preferences are fundamentally opposed.

In light of this thesis' concern with the electorate's voting decisions and thus the public at large, it makes good sense to divide P4 into two sub-players. On the one hand, there shall be P_{4.1} whose approach it is to avoid public discourse while advancing its interests. On the other hand there is P_{4.2} whose approach it is to explicitly encourage public discourse on the course of advancing its interests.

If the players discussed so far are taken into account, it seems P_{4.1} has rather simple considerations to make. Lobby groups exist to exert influence on decision-makers in ways favourable to some third instance. Economist

¹⁴Again, there is need to clarify the chosen phrasing. It may give the impression that civil society groups would easily and deliberately manipulate information if it only influences the public in whichever preferred way. This is of course not necessarily the case. Yet the notion that information of the public is never an end in itself needs to be emphasised.

OLSON considers that business interests draw their high degree of organisation from a usually rather small number of companies active in one single industry. This limited size enables an industry to voluntarily organise and thus provide itself with an active lobby, working for the interests of the companies involved (Olson 1971, 143). The finding of a small number of firms and specialised, common interests will certainly hold for the arms industry. The main point is that for a given business, the costs of lobbying are smaller than gains from it. Lobbying costs < lobbying gains applies. These gains go directly to the business while individuals have to share their gains. For the individual, cost > shared gain applies.

Do lobby groups and the businesses they represent need to be regarded as two distinct players with identical interests or as one cohesive player? This question is actually of limited importance as neither reading regards abstention from the exertion of influence as advisable. Inaction is no way in which $P_{4.1}$ could realistically advance its interests. It would rather only amount to the lobby group not properly serving its purpose. This holds for any lobby group, both in unison and not in unison with its principal. Thus, any lobby group will most definitely take action by seeking to influence the government's conduct. This is even more plausible as a lobby group seemingly does not have to fear negative repercussions of such action. Its exertion of influence takes place in a non-public environment. Thus, public approval, among other factors, is of little importance to it. The question for a lobby group when taking action is hence rather between success and failure than between success and failure exacerbated by punishment. Given this, influencing action towards the government will always be a lobby group's preferred option over inaction.¹⁵

In contrast to lobby groups, inclusion of the public in policy discourse is not to be avoided but actively sought by $P_{4.2}$. These are usually interest groups hailing from civil society and lacking the financial means that lobby groups tend to command. With their aim of including the public they precisely counteract the preferences of lobby groups and are likely to lobby for contrasting interests. A civil society group does not directly influence the government. This approach is mostly abandoned, facing the superior initial position of lobby groups and given the lack of means civil society groups suffer from. Instead, a civil society group seeks to include the public and thus the electorate into the discourse. It does so first and foremost through information. As mentioned above, it resembles the media in that respect, regardless of whether a particular civil society group is a *watchdog* or a *consent manufacturer*. By including the electorate in the debate, a civil society group aims to exert pressure on the government to deal with the policy C in question in a certain way, most likely to revise it to D . A civil society group influencing the electorate is a necessary condition, the electorate pressuring the government to revise C is a sufficient one.

Similar to its lack of means to directly influence the government, $P_{4.2}$ also does not command the most extensive means to reach large shares of the public. In fact it partly depends on the media and its greater means

¹⁵However, theoretically a lobby group could opt to not take action. After all, as detailed in section, the government has its own incentive to pursue said unpopular policy C , just as it is in the lobby group's interest. Thus, $P_{4.1}$ merely reinforces preferences of P_1 , rather than generating them. Consequentially, a lobby group has a chance to achieve its end even if it remains inactive, given that $P_{4.1}$ and P_1 are in agreement over which policy to pursue. The government hence may act in ways preferred by the lobby group without the latter becoming active. Yet, if a lobby group was so sure about coming to achieve its end without action, it would not need to exist in the first place. After all, any lobby group was created to achieve a goal for its principal.

of influencing the public. Considering this, a civil society group needs the media to act as well, preferably with a comparable agenda, and cover an issue. As pointed out in the preceding section 3.5.1, activity of the media can be assumed in a polity with sufficient levels of press freedom. This will inform the public and subsequently may increase chances that the electorate will act accordingly towards the government. Preferably more than one player need to act in a certain way in order that $P_{4.2}$ can achieve its end. It is not only the fact of more difficult access to decision-makers that puts civil society at a disadvantage. OLSON already noted “that the organized and active interest of small groups tends to triumph over the unorganized and unprotected interests of larger groups” (Olson 1971, 144). This tendency is what makes organised industry interests a formidable opponent. He furthermore noted that “[a]lthough particular industries normally have disproportionate power on questions of particular importance to themselves, it does not follow that the business community has disproportionate power when dealing with broad questions of national concern” (Olson 1971, 145). Yet it still exemplifies why industry interests can be such a powerful opponent in fields of immediate concern to themselves. Any civil society group’s odds may thus be considerably lower.

Regarding the conduct of research on interest groups there may well be problems associated with them. As lobby groups prefer to stay out of the spotlight, comprehensive source documents are unlikely to exist. The efforts of lobby groups can possibly be traced from media reports after the event. However, relying only on secondary sources should not be satisfying. The situation of source material should be different for civil society groups. If they are opposed players as estimated above, the material on both kinds of interest groups would not be on equal terms though. The focus will thus rather be on the confrontation of political parties in government and opposition and the media’s contribution.

3.5.3 P_5 – the electorate

The decision that all office-seeking political players keep in mind in their own processes of decision-making is that of the electorate. Ideally, the voters will, after being informed and/or influenced by these and other players such as the media and interest groups, decide whether they approve or disapprove of a certain policy. As indicated in the preceding subsections from different perspectives, public standing of political parties is important but not vital in the middle of a legislative term. It is during elections times that the electorate’s opinion becomes crucial. Any individual voting decision is based on that individual’s opinion, shaped by manifold factors.

Two basic assumptions of this thesis need to be revisited. First, one possibility for voters to base their voting decision on is through retrospectively evaluating the incumbent government’s past performance. This is retrospective voting. Although it would be a flawed approach to completely ignore candidates’ plans and promises for the future term, retrospective voting occurs to a considerable extent. The second assumption is that some policies can be identified as *unpopular*. While it is a term difficult to define and to generalise the sum of opinions towards a policy as such, an approximate definition suffices. A policy can be deemed *unpopular* if a majority of voters unanimously disagrees with it and rejects it.

Thus it is easy to conceive that voters will also disapprove of the government enacting such a policy C . If an

election was only about enacting or not enacting said policy, the incumbent government would most certainly lose office. However, as pointed out in the beginning of section 3, this is not the case. Voters have to weigh in their rejection of that particular policy C against other policies by the parties championing it. Simply the fact that a candidate may equally reject that one policy does not guarantee that candidate to be such a voter's overall preferable choice. On the one hand, the unpopular policy in question here may in fact be the only matter a voter and a particular candidate may agree on. On the other hand, a candidate championing the policy clearly against a voter's preferences may in fact, apart from that, only propose policies said voter agrees with. Both findings do of course apply to more retrospective terms: on the one hand, a candidate and a voter may have agreed about nothing else than their rejection of the policy at hand. On the other hand, apart from that policy, a candidate may have only followed policies said voter wholeheartedly agrees with.

Now suppose the simple example outlined above, the dichotomies of A and B on the one side and C and D on the other side. The first constitutes a major issue, possibly identified by observers to be the election's decisive one. In the case of Germany in 2013 these might be the question of how to handle the EU's debt crisis best, with A and B being two extreme policy positions. The second dichotomy is a relatively minor issue, in this case arms exports to recipients with flawed records of human rights. C is the relatively unhindered export of arms and D the championing of restrictiveness. Put simply, a voter may prefer A and D . However, the party most clearly championing D is opposed to A . Instead, that party favours B and D . The party most clearly arguing for A may favour C . This voter then may be tempted to vote for the latter party for the sake of A while foregoing D .

These ideas all point to two sides of one central question regarding the electorate: first, when and under which circumstances will the government's unpopular policy C change a voter's voting decision? Second, when and under which circumstances do the voters who are willing to change their voting decision drive the government to abandon unpopular policy C ? As pointed out before, even identifying a policy as *unpopular* does certainly not mean that each and every single voter does reject it. There are voters in the case of every generally unpopular policy that will agree with it or are at least plain indifferent. These voters will naturally not modify their voting preference and subsequent voting decision once said policy has become public. Hence, the main concern has to lie with those voters who reject the policy C and thus disagree with the incumbent government implementing it.

Within this group, the focus has to be on those disapproving voters who otherwise do affiliate themselves with or support the incumbent government. A certain number of voters from that group has to be willing to withdraw its support for the incumbent government. This number has to be sufficient so that the incumbent government regards its reelection to be in danger. It is only then that the incumbent government may come to a different result in its cost-benefit analysis. The trade-off between enjoying whichever benefits entailed in that policy and the risk of losing office is crucial for any political actor seeking reelection.

With these assumptions the game played between the incumbent government and its voters can be kept reasonably simple. P_1 has to decide whether to stand by its unpopular policy C or to stop it. In the former

case, P_1 will obtain g but will also alienate a certain number of its likely voters. Hence it will suffer damages to its public approval $-a_1$ which possibly endanger reelection. In the latter case, it will retain a higher degree of public approval and thus higher chances of reelection. There is a certain probability that voters will modify their voting decision in numbers sufficient to prevent P_1 's reelection. Depending on what P_1 deems this probability to be it decide whether to cease pursuing C or to rest assured about its reelection and to secure g .

Accordingly, $P_{5,j}$, that is any individual voter affiliated with the incumbent government but critical of policy C , has to retrospectively decide whether to uphold support for P_1 or to cease support. The latter can mean to abstain from voting or vote for a party expressly championing D . The best outcome would then be for $P_{5,j}$ to get satisfaction from ceasing support for P_1 in protest, abstaining from voting altogether or voting for a respective third party. If P_1 remains in office anyway, $P_{5,j}$ will enjoy said satisfaction while still enjoying the most important payoff A . In the worst case, $P_{5,j}$ is pivotal and subsequently $P_{2,1}$ wins. This may lead to the policy combination (B,C) which is the worst possible outcome for $P_{5,j}$. Considering this, it might be the safest strategy for any individual $P_{5,j}$ to maintain support for P_1 . This is likely to be the most promising strategy to secure A while not risking it for the sake of disapproval of the marginal C .

Chapter 4

Source material and source criticism

An analysis of the foreign and arms export policies of the Federal Republic of Germany can draw on a wide variety of sources. Regardless of the aura of secrecy surrounding the topic of international arms trade there is a considerable body of material freely accessible to any interested reader.

The most important source to evaluate the activity of parliamentarians on any issue are the protocols of the parliament's plenary sessions. These enable any reader to understand which parliamentary faction seeks debate about which topic and which faction does not. Since these protocols are not anonymous but give name and faction of any parliamentarian speaking, they would even suffice for individual evaluations. My analysis focuses on party positions though and includes the names of individual politicians only if deemed necessary. Even more than the already freely accessible interpellations and subsequent answers, the protocols are public documents. Plenary sessions are broadcast live by the public special-interest TV station *PHOENIX* and are accessible online¹. Low ratings of said TV station (1,1% in 2013) may not be what an optimistic proponent of the public sphere and discourse within it may wish for (KEK 2013). However, they do not undo the fact that public access is established. One should note that the protocols do not quote the speeches by MdBs verbatim. This becomes obvious if one compares the protocols' text to the videos from parliament recorded live. Yet, differences and thus changes appear to be mainly of linguistic nature rather than substantial. The proceedings are interesting in their own right for evaluating activity by the federal government and the parliamentary opposition. Undoubtedly an important source for the media's coverage of German politics as well, it should be insightful to see what the media makes of the plenary sessions.

Another important source to track and evaluate activity of the parliament is constituted by its different tools of inquiry. These are all important in support of the parliamentarians' right to ask question and hence essential in ensuring the parliament's control of the government. There are major interpellations and minor interpellations as tools for groups of parliamentarians. Written and verbal questions are tools available to individual parliamentarians. These are not of primary concern here as the aim is to track behaviour of the

¹See <http://www.bundestag.de/mediathek>.

political players, in this case entire parliamentary groups. According to the website of the German Bundestag, major interpellations have continuously lost significance since the Federal Republic's establishment in 1949. Minor interpellations, however, have continuously risen in importance. It is important to note that these tools are in no way reserved to parties belonging to the parliamentary opposition. It is not a means for the opposition to control the government but for the legislative to control the executive. Bearing this fact in mind, it is all the more instructive that interpellations are used by factions of the opposition by a great majority. In the 16th legislative period, lasting from 2005 to 2009, the share of the opposition stood at 98,4% in posing major interpellations and at 100% for minor interpellations. The respective figures for written and verbal questions are 77,9% and 93,9% (DB 2011).

An obviously favourite tool of the opposition, minor interpellations should prove useful in tracking the opposition's activity. This should hold even more for an unpopular issue that the government may wish to avoid. Regardless of this fact, the opposition does not go free of criticism. Political scientists agree that minor interpellations are especially useful in demonstrating activity. This is especially so since minor interpellations produce a handy document easy to spread among interest groups, associations and similar players. Spreading of interpellations and answers to them through third actors is even considered more important than media coverage of the same. In all activity it is important to answer the question of that activity's purpose. It has been discussed whether interpellations still fulfill their primary task of being an instrument of control or whether they have become a mere means of symbolic politics. On the Bundestag's website the verdict is still rather benevolent. It states as inappropriate the discounting of the instrument of interpellation as "political show business" (DB 2011).

In order to provide for transparency on Germany's arms export, the federal government releases a post hoc arms export report, in German *Rüstungsexportbericht* (REB) for short. It is published by the *Federal Ministry for Economy and Technology*, in German the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie (BMWi).² Until recently it was published annually in autumn of one year, reporting on the preceding one. This changed after the last federal elections, providing for a timelier release. Thus not only the report on 2013 is already available but even a preliminary report on 2014. Without the changes toward timelier release, this report would not yet be available. These reports do not only contain information on permitted, denied and possible future arms exports, they also contain the rules that the German federal administration seeks to follow in its arms exports. They are an important source for yet another reason. Whenever the behaviour of a particular actor toward an issue is under scrutiny, in this case the German federal government's behaviour regarding arms exports, it is advisable to consult sources offered by that actor.³ While these sources of course must be complemented by outside sources, the consultation of outside sources alone cannot suffice. By using sources on the same topic of different origins, the interpretation of possible discrepancies may offer insights.

²On the 17th December 2013 the *Federal Ministry for Economy and Technology* was renamed the *Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy*. Accordingly the *REB* is cited as BMWi 2010-2013.

³This is not to say that officially available sources are exhaustive or constitute the entirety of governmental sources on the issue. Other, more secretive sources may only be available after a blocking period.

Party name	Abbreviation ⁶	Political alignment
Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands ⁷	CDU	Christian democracy, conservatism liberalism
Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern	CSU	Christian democracy, conservatism federalism
Freie Demokratische Partei	FDP	liberalism
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	SPD	social democracy, progressivism
Bündnis'90/Die Grünen	B90G	green politics, social liberalism
Die Linke	Left	democratic socialism

Table 4.1: Main political parties in the Federal Republic of Germany

For readers unfamiliar with the political constellation in Germany, this table presents the six political parties of relevance for this study. The terms chosen under *political alignment* are intentionally and necessarily vague. They do, however, serve to give the reader an impression of the parties' basic political position. For references the reader is referred to the parties' respective websites.

One important example of an outside source is the *Yearbook* published by the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute* (SIPRI). SIPRI is a well-renowned and often-cited resource on arms transfers and its *Yearbook* was, before the changes for a timelier release of the *REB*, published considerably earlier than the German government's official report. The *SIPRI Yearbook 2013* is already available. It is explicitly mentioned in the German government's official *REB* and its methodology criticised. "It attempts to estimate the actual value of a weapons system, independent of the selling price actually agreed upon in a particular trade", thus resulting in fictitious values which complicate comparability with other publications. The official report judges that "due to a shortage of worldwide comparable data the publications of non-governmental organisations and scientific institutions are ultimately of limited diagnostic value" (BMWi 2010, 40-41⁴). While it does make sense to consult outside sources only as complementary resources we also have to note the overall critical stance of SIPRI towards German arms exports. This is to say that Germany repeatedly ranks as one of the world's most prominent arms exporters, third only to the USA and the Russian Federation. Consequentially, the official report by the government cites other outside resources with more benevolence, such as the report published by the US *Congressional Research Service* (CRS), based in Washington, D.C. or the primarily London-based *International Institute for Strategic Studies* (IISS)⁵ (BMWi 2011, 34; BMWi 2012, 35).

⁴The quotations in their original German language: "Dabei wird versucht, den tatsächlichen Wert eines Waffensystems zu schätzen, unabhängig von dem in einem konkreten Geschäft tatsächlich vereinbarten Kaufpreis."; "Mangels weltweit vergleichbaren Datenmaterials sind die Veröffentlichungen von Nichtregierungsorganisationen und Fachinstituten daher letztlich von begrenztem Aussagewert."

⁵Besides London, the IISS maintains permanent offices in Washington, D.C., Singapore and Manama, Bahrain.

⁶The abbreviations of the first four parties are the official ones used by the parties themselves and in German discourse. *B90G* was chosen for convenience's sake as the party's name is usually not abbreviated in the German political discussion. The same holds for the *Left* which is simply the English translation of the party's German name.

⁷The CDU runs in 15 out of 16 German states while the CSU runs solely in Bavaria. They form one parliamentary group in the German Parliament and are thus commonly referred to as *sister parties*.

Party	1994		1998		2002		2005 ⁸		2009	
CDU/CSU ⁹	41,5	294	35,1	245	38,5	248	35,2	226	33,8	239
FDP	6,9	47	6,2	43	7,4	47	9,8	61	14,6	93
SPD	36,4	252	40,9	298	38,5	251	34,2	222	23,0	146
B90G	7,3	49	6,7	47	8,6	55	8,1	51	10,7	68
Left ¹⁰	4,4	30	5,1	36	4,0	2	8,7	54	11,9	76

Table 4.2: Election results of the main political parties in Germany from 1994 to 2009

This table illustrates the federal election results of the six parties which have been represented in parliament thus far in the elections from 1994 to 2009. The left-hand column of a year shows the result of a party regarding second votes. The second vote is considered the more important vote because it determines a party's share of seats in parliament whereas the first vote is a winner-takes-it-all vote in a certain constituency depending on where a voter is registered. Accordingly, the right-hand column of a year shows the number of a party's seats in parliament in the subsequent legislative period. Parties forming the government in a subsequent legislative period are highlighted in grey. The results of the parliamentary election of 2013 are excluded here for dramaturgic reasons. They can be found in table . For references see Bundeswahlleiter 2014.

Not only the official *REB* is freely accessible once it is published. The websites of the federal government and its ministries provide access to various kinds of documents.¹¹ Of utmost importance in the establishment of the greater foreign policy background to German arms exports is the white book on Germany's security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr, in German the *Weißbuch 2006 zur Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr* (WB).¹² The issue of 2006 was devised while a grand coalition of CDU/CSU and SPD was in office. Said coalition took office in 2005 and was the first cabinet led by Federal Chancellor *Angela Merkel* (CDU) who has remained in that position to this day. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 provide further information for those readers who are unfamiliar with the landscape of political parties in Germany. The Federal Minister of Defence overseeing the *White Book* of 2006 was *Franz-Josef Jung* (CDU). An indicator of the *White Book's* relevance is the fact that the 2006 version's predecessor was published in 1994, as a reaction to the foreign policy shifts triggered necessary by the conclusion of the cold war. Hence three subsequent federal governments, governing from 1994 to 2005, did not publish a *White Book*. It can therefore be safely assumed that the *White Book* contains refined, far-reaching policy guidelines rather than short-term details to be ignored or forgotten in the long term. A publication to complement this important source on foreign policy are the *Defence Policy Guidelines* (DPG), *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* in German, released in 2011.¹³ They are officially available in German, English and French; accordingly the English version is cited here. As a source

⁸The elections of 2005 were early elections.

⁹Since CDU and CSU always form one parliamentary group they are presented in combination here.

¹⁰The Left constituted itself as such in 2007. The party's predecessor PDS competed in the elections of 2005 and prior

¹¹Among the federal agencies consulted most frequently for this thesis are the Federal Government (www.bundesregierung.de), the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (www.auswaertiges-amt.de), the Federal Ministry of Defence (www.bmvg.de) and the Federal Ministry for Economy and Energy (www.bmwi.de).

¹²Since the WB is released by the Federal Ministry of Defence, the *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung* (BMVg) in German, it will be cited as BMVg 2006.

¹³Like the WB, the DPG are published by the *Federal Ministry of Defence* and will thus be cited as BMVg 2011.

they are even more promising since their publication falls just within the time in focus in this work. In May of 2011, the month of their publication, the upheavals in the Arab world had already taken place for several months, yet in retrospect the movement may be seen as early on in the process. Conceivably contemporary events may already have caused modifications in the *Defence Policy Guidelines* in comparison to the *White Book*.

There are more sources available than only long-elaborated publications of guiding character. More ad hoc sources such as speeches can prove very valuable as well. Chancellor *Merkel* gave a speech on the 5th of February 2011 at the *47th Munich Security Conference* whose date also falls well within the earliest stages of the upheavals in the Arab world. Gaining insights in how the German federal government approaches the Arab spring and issues ensuing in its wake is of major importance for an evaluation of Germany's foreign and thus also its arms export policy. A source that has widely been interpreted in this way is a speech given by Chancellor *Merkel* on the 9th of September 2011 during a gala commemorating 50 years of *Bergedorf Round Table*, an annual discussion event held by the *Körber Foundation*. In this speech journalists of German weekly *Der Spiegel* identified those allegedly new notions in German foreign policy which they called the *Merkel doctrine* (see section 6.1).

The source material selected for the media analysis is mainly free to access online. Some newspapers though have the amount of freely accessible articles limited to a certain number per month. Since this number is sufficiently large it fortunately did not negatively impact on my research. The material will be discussed in detail in section 6.6.

Chapter 5

The historical and political context

In the introduction I have chosen arms exports into countries with questionable records on human rights as an example of a policy that is unpopular to the German public. In my case study I focus, due to events of recent years, on countries in the vast MENA region. This shall not obscure the fact that such criticism can be mounted against other regions of the world.

In order to understand the unpopular course of action taken by the German government it is necessary to have a certain degree of comprehension of its reasoning. Hence I need to gain insights into what the German government sees as the purpose of its foreign policy. Regarding the export of arms as a special field of foreign policy, this has to be a particular focus. Reasonable claims about the gain the government expects from the export of arms can only be made once the assumptions guiding German foreign policy are identified. If I can identify the gain g , that is, the reason for pursuing an unpopular policy C , I can more reasonably investigate the games played between players.

5.1 The tenets of German foreign policy

An analysis of Germany's foreign and defence policy in 2011 can draw on a variety of sources. However, any government's policy should be expected to be based on long-term considerations. One should thus expect to find recurring themes in source material originating from different years or even different administrations.

The WB of 2006 identifies the “values, interests and objectives” of Germany's security policy. German security policy is guided by “the values of the Basic Law and the aim to observe the interests of our country” (BMVg 2006, 9).¹ The following items are listed as these interests:

- to protect its citizens' rights and liberty, democracy, security and welfare and protect them from danger

¹To readers unfamiliar with the matter it should be noted that the *Basic Law*, *Grundgesetz* (GG) in German, despite its rather unassuming name, is actually the Federal Republic of Germany's constitution. The name was chosen in 1949 to emphasise its provisional character as the partition of Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic in the aftermath of the Second World War was equally seen as provisional.

- to secure the sovereignty and integrity of the German state territory
- to prevent regional crises and conflicts, if possible, which could impair Germany's security, and to contribute to crisis management
- to face global challenges, above all the threat by international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction
- to contribute to respect for human rights and the strengthening of the international order on the basis of international law
- to promote free and unhindered world trade as the basis of Germany's wealth and to help overcoming the gap between poor and rich regions of the world²

Statements such as this, published in a document intended for the general public, of course need further elaboration. This is due to the vagueness and high degree of interpretability inherent in many of the terms used.

Moreover, the DPG from 2011 sort these items differently, although basic notions are maintained. The security and protection of German citizens, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Germany and its allies and the fulfilment of international responsibilities are counted as *security objectives*. Others are identified as *security interests*: Among those are the prevention and management of conflicts and crises that endanger the security of Germany and its allies and the advocacy and implementation of foreign and security policy positions in a manner that is assertive and credible. Transatlantic and European security and partnership are to be strengthened.³ While *security* is already a term that is difficult to grasp, this holds to an even greater extent for the concept of *European security*. In fact, political scientist BURGESS of the *Peace Research Institute Oslo* (PRIO) argues that there is no single *European security* but rather *European securities*. He claims that “[t]he value-laden nature of security and insecurity has contributed to a fragmented evolution in European approaches to the challenge” (Burgess 2009, 310). His argument is primarily focused on the security from terrorism but nevertheless sheds a light on the elusiveness of the term *security*. Any integration of European security efforts has to be an arduous task.

Despite this finding, the WB's authors identify the reunited Germany as well integrated in the EU, NATO, the UN, the OSCE and others. Even more, they declare the first three of these organisations to be the framework

²BMVg 2006, 24. The passage in its original German language: “Recht und Freiheit, Demokratie, Sicherheit und Wohlfahrt für die Bürgerinnen und Bürger unseres Landes zu bewahren und sie vor Gefährdungen zu schützen; die Souveränität und die Unversehrtheit des deutschen Staatsgebietes zu sichern; regionalen Krisen und Konflikten, die Deutschlands Sicherheit beeinträchtigen können, wenn möglich vorzubeugen und zur Krisenbewältigung beizutragen; globalen Herausforderungen, vor allem der Bedrohung durch den internationalen Terrorismus und die Weiterverbreitung von Massenvernichtungswaffen, zu begegnen; zur Achtung der Menschenrechte und Stärkung der internationalen Ordnung auf der Grundlage des Völkerrechts beizutragen; den freien und ungehinderten Welthandel als Grundlage unseres Wohlstands zu fördern und dabei die Kluft zwischen armen und reichen Weltregionen überwinden zu helfen.”

³Among other commitment this does clearly refer to NATO, a military alliance of which the Federal Republic of Germany was, due to its geostrategic position during the cold war, an integral part since the its accession the 9th of May 1955. In fact, the Federal Republic joined NATO before it even founded own armed forces, the *Bundeswehr*, on the 12th of November 1955, after the end of the Second World War.

of Germany's security and defence policy (BMVg 2011, 5). While the exact degree of European integration in terms of security may be debatable, the integration in other fields can hardly be doubted. The authors are well aware of this degree of integration, noting the country's position as Europe's most populous country, prime economic power and of its location at the continent's center. From these facts they derive its "international responsibility for liberty and peace." More concise than the above enumeration, Germany works for the "maintenance of peace, defence from global threats, the promotion of democracy and human rights, sustainable development and cooperative security" (BMVg 2006, 16-17).

Hence Germany declares an interest to advocate the universality of human rights and democratic principles and to promote global respect for international law. It also wishes to reduce the gap between the poor and rich regions of the world. Free and unrestricted trade on a global level as well as the access to the high seas and to natural resources need to be maintained in the interest of security (BMVg 2011, 4). In the case of terrorism, researcher VIRTÀ has argued that *security* may often be used as a mere justification for counter terrorism measures (Virtà 2011). It is conceivable that security may be used as a means of justification in other contexts, especially if it remains largely undefined.

Other global challenges are identified which Germany has to face in cooperation with its international partners. Among those, as mentioned above, is the necessity to face international terrorism and nuclear arms proliferation. However, it is not only weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and border-defying terrorism that is of concern. In connection with intrastate and regional conflicts the WB counts the illegal and uncontrolled exports of arms and the negative influence of small arms on conflicts (BMVg 2006, 16-17, 21).⁴ The DPG elaborate further on the issue of diminishing state power. They state "[t]hat the greatest challenges today lie less in the strength of other states than in their weakness" while "[t]he risk of political, economic and criminal abuse by state and non-state actors is increasing" (BMVg 2011, 2). Global developments such as climate change are of express concern and likewise are its alleged consequences. These are given as "[d]esertification, water and land shortages, uneven population densities, and enormous prosperity gaps in connection with social disparity [which] are leading to worldwide migration flows to economically better developed regions and causing considerable conflict potential for the regions in question." (BMVg 2011, 3).

Expecting this process of shifts on a global scale to continue, the German government announces to cooperatively face the challenges ahead. At the same time it will try to shape them according to its responsibility and its interests (BMVg 2006, 18). Again, terms such as *responsibility* and *interests* carry little meaning if they are not fully clarified or too encompassing. What is easily conceivable, however, is the fact that both could be on conflicting terms. Depending on how and by whom they are defined, they can well be contradictory. For example, responsibilities can exist through obligations shaped by membership in supranational organisations while interests stem from national deliberations.

⁴Interstate conflicts are explicitly not a main concern anymore for German policy-making. One may take into consideration the absolute focus on said interstate conflicts during the decades of the cold war. From this perspective, this has to be regarded as a major update of Germany's foreign policy focus. Said intrastate conflicts are a topic of discussion since the 1990s. For a revised standard work see Kaldor 2007.

Another problem is that the terms are not used in perfectly coherent ways. The DPG explicitly differentiate *security objectives* and *security interests*, with the former being of an arguably more essential importance (BMVg 2011, 4). The WB, however, seemingly assigns a greater importance to *interests* which are lined up above. There the term *objective* is rare and only applied to the strengthening of the transatlantic alliance, European integration and active neighborhood policy (BMVg 2006, 24).

The situation of the guiding principles of German foreign policy is further complicated when the *values of the Basic Law* are introduced to the discussion. These are not discussed in the documents and it is not possible to discuss the *Basic Law* in length here. However, we can note that for one thing, based on past experiences the *Basic Law* was specifically designed as a safeguard against dictatorship and state arbitrariness. For another thing, based on those same experiences it bears heavy emphasis on individual civil and human rights.⁵ Clearly, the authors of the WB regard these values to be self-evident as they are not elucidated further. This makes sense as the WB potentially addresses a German audience.

There are authoritarian regimes which lack precisely these individual human rights. Since the main issue of this thesis' case study is the export of arms to this kind of polity, arguments are obviously being weighed against each other. In doing so, some seemingly outdo the *values of the Basic Law* as guidance for German security policy. I will now investigate how the government of the Federal Republic of Germany declares how it will handle international arms exports in theory.

5.2 The government's stance on the export of arms

The government of the Federal Republic of Germany addresses the topic of arms exports as part of its foreign policy. One may find very differing data on the extent of Germany's international arms exports. Regardless of the data to which one subscribes, the position of the German arms industry as one of the leading in the world is nowhere in doubt.

The German federal government emphasises the need for an approach to arms exports which further integrates the member states of the EU. Furthermore, it postulates that "[c]ompetitive industrial abilities in technical core areas of the German arms industry are maintained in a balanced European partnership via interagency approaches and in dialogue with the industry". The German federal government announces support for the efforts of German arms-producing businesses in order to reach a sufficient workload. This support is, of course, always limited by the control mechanisms which are in place. Own capacities in arms technology and European integration in arms exports are not seen as two different aspects. Rather, they are regarded as conditioning each other. Own capacities are seen as a prerequisite to exert any influence in the process of European integration in the arms-producing sector (BMVg 2006, 79).⁶ This position is not seen as unique to Germany and is assessed

⁵This is well expressed in the *Basic Law's* §1 "Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar", freely translated as *human dignity is inviolable*. For the full *Basic Law* see GG.

⁶The CDU/CSU as the senior partner of the grand coalition in office at the time has a general reputation of being benevolent to business. This alone, however, certainly cannot explain Germany's policy on arms exports. As it will become apparent later, the junior coalition partner SPD between 2005 and 2009 has not been an unequivocal voice against arms exports and for a weakening

critically by researcher JACKSON of SIPRI. She noted the prestige connected to a domestic arms industry which inhibits integration of European arms industries. At the same time, duplicate research and development would lead to unnecessary spending. Despite express intentions for such integration and due to the necessary complex process, she did not expect thorough cooperation in the short term (Jackson 2012, 224-227).

Thus the WB encompasses a subsection on *arms control and disarmament* which provides insights into the German government's efforts on these issues. It seems that WMDs such as nuclear, chemical and biological weapons enjoy a higher priority than conventional arms. Efforts regarding the former are described in far greater detail. Concerning control of conventional arms, a focus on Europe and the direct neighbours to the south-east on the Balkans can be identified.⁷ The German Bundeswehr has established its own office for the monitoring of arms control agreements. The German government campaigns for the introduction of binding international standards by the UN for the export of small arms. It also states to especially support African states in small arms control (BMVg 2006, 56-57).

Indeed, positions of the German mission to the UN regarding the *Arms Trade Treaty* (ATT) were much in favour of an agreement. The German delegation in 2011 was expressively seeking "a legally binding international framework for arms transfers with globally agreed parameters and scope for responsible transfer control decisions on a national level and under national responsibility." (AA 11.07.2011). The delegation calls for "structure and realism" in aiming for an ATT that is "effective, robust and implementable." Yet there was no doubt about the German delegation's preference to leave states as the solely responsible actors in the implementation of the future treaty's provisions. It accordingly also declined any interference into arms transfers occurring within a state or occurring across borders for use by that one state (AA 15.07.2011). The negotiations finally took until spring of 2013, with the main dividing line between states being "the issue of weighing state security interests against human security concerns" (Holtom et al. 2013, 426).⁸ . According to its own statements, the German government was actively engaging in the negotiations for an ATT (BMW 2011, 15-16). Describing one's stance as *active* does not tell much. In fact, it is safe to say that the German government was at least not an early force seeking an international treaty on the regulation of arms exports. It was a group of other countries which supported negotiations for such a treaty as early as 2006. This group consisted of Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, Japan, Kenya and the UK (Bromley et al. 2012, 1038-1041). However, when negotiations finally took place, the German delegation fully associated itself with comments made by the delegation of the EU (AA 15.07.2011). The latter, distinguishing itself through numerous comments during the negotiations in 2011 alone, was more proactive than most of its individual member states. Thus, Germany's benevolent passiveness may have to be seen in connection with efforts of EU representatives. Although the Federal Republic of Germany might not have been a driving force on the way to the ATT it certainly was not operating against it. Instead it was always supportive of what its main allies were aiming for. It equally supported efforts by the EU of which Germany is one of the most influential members. This had been laid out in the WB of 2006.

of the German arms producing sector.

⁷For the Vienna Document referred to in BMVg 2006, see OSCE 1999.

⁸For details on the ATT negotiations see Holtom et al. 2013, 423-431.

Germany's very benevolent view on legally binding standards for arms exports is also understandable from its own, already existing rather high standards. The EU has released a *Common Position 2008/944/CFSP* as part of its *Common Foreign and Security Policy* (CFSP). While this *Common Position* does contain critical criteria on which to base decisions on arms exports, it thus far fails to constitute an effective EU regime on arms exports. The desire of member states to retain sovereignty on the matter hindered a stricter integration of European arms export policies. According to researcher MOLTMANN of the *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt* (PRIF) the *Common Position* has nevertheless led to a more thorough documentation of arms exports by EU member states and is thus, like other international norms, likely to develop more leverage with time (Moltmann 2012).⁹ BAUER ET AL. also point out the adoption of a new regulation on intra-EU arms trade, despite no major developments regarding EU rules on arms exports at large had been achieved (Bauer et al. 2013, 457).

As for Germany, the German government claims to not only have included the *Common Position* in its *political guidelines of the federal government for the export of weapons of war and other armaments*, in German the *Politische Grundsätze der Bundesregierung für den Export von Kriegswaffen und sonstigen Rüstungsgütern* (PolG).¹⁰ Even more, the German government claims its own *PolG* to be already more restrictive in their provisions (BMWi 2011, 9-11). Thus a closer analysis of the *PolG* and other guiding documents is absolutely vital for any evaluation of German arms exports policies.

Weapons of war are the most critical class of goods addressed in the *REB*. They are governed by the *Gesetz über die Kontrolle von Kriegswaffen*, short *Kriegswaffenkontrollgesetz* (KWKG), the Law on the Control of Weapons of War. There is no basic entitlement of the applicant to be granted the permission to export. The application for permission for their export has to be denied if

- there exists the danger that those weapons of war will be used in a peace-disturbing action, especially a war of aggression,
- there is reason to assume that permission will breach obligations of the Federal Republic under the law of nations or endanger their fulfillment
- there is reason to assume that the recipient does not possess the necessary reliability.¹¹

Conditions differ concerning the somewhat less sensitive class of *other armaments* as opposed to *weapons of war*. These goods are governed by the *Außenwirtschaftsgesetz* (AWG) and the *Außenwirtschaftsverordnung* (AWV). There is a basic entitlement of the applicant to be granted the permission to export. This permission can be denied to

- ensure basic security interests of the Federal Republic of Germany,

⁹In support of this finding see also Lebovic 2006 on the relationship between democracy and transparency of arms exports.

¹⁰Since the *PolG* are included in the appendix of each *REB*, I will, for the sake of convenience, cite the respective pages of the *REB* also when referring to the *PolG*.

¹¹KWKG §6 (3). The passage in its original German language: "Die Genehmigung ist zu versagen, wenn 1. die Gefahr besteht, dass die Kriegswaffen bei einer friedensstörenden Handlung, insbesondere bei einem Angriffskrieg verwendet werden, 2. Grund zu der Annahme besteht, daß die Erteilung der Genehmigung völkerrechtliche Verpflichtungen der Bundesrepublik verletzen oder deren Erfüllung gefährden würde, 3. Grund zu der Annahme besteht, daß eine der in Absatz 2, Nr. 2 genannten Personen die für die beabsichtigte Handlung erforderliche Zuverlässigkeit nicht besitzt."

- prevent a disruption of the peaceful coexistence of peoples,
- to prevent a considerable disruption of the Federal Republic of Germany's foreign relations.¹²

Note that *human rights* and their guarantee by the receiving country are not an express part of these laws. This applies to both KWKG and AWG and hence for both *weapons of war* and *other armaments*.

However, to ensure that such values do play a role in export considerations the German government devised the self-imposed *PolG*. In these, one may find the issue of German arms exports into countries with questionable human rights records summed up in a few paragraphs. The KWKG, the AWG and several international provisions by the EU and the OSCE determine the scope of all export decisions. Respect for human rights in the country receiving exports is of "particular importance". This applies to both *weapons of war* and *other armaments*. Moreover, as a matter of principle, exports are denied if it is suspected that they might be used for internal repression or for other continuous and systematic violations of human rights. For this decision, the human rights situation in a country is vital. In order to assess this situation not only are reports by the EU, the EC, the UN, the OSCE and other international panels taken into consideration; reports of international human rights organisations are considered as well (BMWi 2013, 34¹³). Regarding *third countries*¹⁴, the export of *weapons of war* is not authorised unless particular foreign policy or security interests of the Federal Republic of Germany militate for an approval. Such approval is "exceptional" and occurs on a "single case" basis (BMWi 2013, 36¹⁵). Considerations of employment may not play a "critical role" in the decision (BMWi 2013, 36). Furthermore, security interests of the receiving country can also be a valid reason for the approval of an export application. This can especially be the case if the recipient has a vital role to play in the fight against terrorism or drug trade or if its security interests are otherwise of international significance (BMWi 2013, 8).

Clearly, this exception causes an important issue that is not expressly addressed in the government's official documents. Say the situation regarding the respect for human rights in a receiving country may point towards a negative decision. At the same time Germany's or that country's security interests may point towards a positive decision. An approving decision on an export application for the latter reasons would then leave the human rights criterion uninfluential. In fact, there is no middle ground for compromise between granting and denying an export application. Thus a criterion of supposed *particular importance* can end up being completely inhibited. This discrepancy is discussed in none of the official documents here so far. It will, however, if worded differently, be of importance in the discussion of parliamentary debates in sections 6 and 7. What is more is that the relative nature of the term *exceptional* does not undergo elucidation. Seemingly it describes something

¹²AWG §4 (1) 1-3. The passage in its original German language: "1. die wesentlichen Sicherheitsinteressen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu gewährleisten, 2. eine Störung des friedlichen Zusammenlebens der Völker zu verhüten, 3. eine erhebliche Störung der auswärtigen Beziehungen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zu verhüten,"

¹³The sentence containing the quotation in its original German language, emphasis added: "Der Beachtung der Menschenrechte im Bestimmungs- und Endverbleibsländ wird bei den Entscheidungen über Exporte von Kriegswaffen und sonstigen Rüstungsgütern besonderes Gewicht beigemessen."

¹⁴*Third countries* are those countries that are neither part of the EU and/or NATO nor one of the countries equivalent to NATO. Countries equivalent to NATO are Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland. See BMWi 2013, 34.

¹⁵The decisive sentence in its original German language: "Der Export von Kriegswaffen wird nur ausnahmsweise genehmigt, wenn im Einzelfall besondere außen- oder sicherheitspolitische Interessen Deutschlands für die Erteilung einer Genehmigung sprechen."

as occurring very rarely. Either way, without delving into linguistic intricacies too much, one finds that all possible synonyms to the term *exceptional* are equally relative.

Nobody in fact governs the application of this part of the *PolG*. Researchers NASSAUER and STEINMETZ of the *Berlin Information-center for Transatlantic Security* (BITS) have identified the guidelines as a problem in themselves already in 2005. They have noted that the *PolG* need to become legally binding. As, so far, merely politically binding guidelines they often have hardly any effect. The three principles of *prevention of violence, human rights and sustainable development* must not remain optional (Nassauer et al. 2005). However, for the situation at present the following findings still need to be stated: both politically-binding guidelines and legally-binding laws play a role in the regulation of German arms exports. Human rights and other normative criteria are referred to as particularly important in the former. Yet, the guidelines do provide for situations in which these criteria do not get applied. In the of course legally-binding laws human rights and similar criteria are not expressly mentioned at all.

Arms export applications are processed by different organs. While the *Federal Foreign Office* (AA) handles *weapons of war*, the *Federal Office of Economics and Export Control* (BAFA) is tasked with *other armaments*. Apart from actual export applications, they often decide on preliminary enquiries by arms manufacturers. With these the companies can clarify whether an arms export has the chance of being admitted before the deal is finalised (BMW 2013, 7). Such preliminary enquiries are not part of the *REB* and are thus obscured to outsiders. If the planned enterprise is to be considered special due to its receiving country, the kind of good to be exported or its business volume, another procedure is triggered.

In this case the application or preliminary enquiry is transferred to the federal government for a political judgment. It can then decide on the particular case in the *Federal Security Council*, called *Bundessicherheitsrat* (BSR) in German (BMW 2011, 8). The BSR which decides on those most sensitive arms exports is an organ made up entirely of members of the government (Behme 2008).¹⁶

Since its inception in 1955, the BSR has caused controversy time and again mainly due to the secrecy of its proceedings which will also show in my case study. The legal assessment, however, is unequivocal. While it is not a constitutional body and thus not authorised to take actual decisions, it has always been more of a deliberative body (Glawe 2012, 335). The resolutions resulting from these deliberations are not legally binding and hence do not overrule the discretionary competence of a responsible Minister. Yet it has been noted that factually the deliberations of the BSR produce a binding effect, by exchanging views between its members on the way to the council's resolutions (Zähle 2005, 478). Regarding the secrecy of its deliberations, recent works on the BSR agree that the opening of its inner processes to parliament would violate the constitutional principle of the separation of powers (Glawe 2012, 334-335; Zähle 2005, 480-482).

¹⁶These are namely the Federal Chancellor as chairperson, the Vice-Federal Chancellor as vice-chairperson and the Federal Ministers of Defence, for Foreign Affairs, of Finance, of the Interior, of Justice, for Economy and Technology, for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Chief of the German Chancellery. Note that some of these titles of Federal Ministers and their Ministries are outdated as the names of some have changed with the current federal administration taking office. For example the *Minister for Economy and Technology* is now the *Federal Minister for Economy and Energy*. The names are thus correct until 17th of December 2013, the day the cabinet *Merkel III* was sworn into office.

Before I have a more in-depth look at the events surrounding the debate on German arms exports in the years 2011 to 2013, a short review of above proceedings is in order. Human rights, the prevention of violence and other normative ideas have a prominent place the *PolG* on the export of arms. They are, nevertheless, not part of the law. Moreover, the final purpose of German foreign policy in general and German arms exports in particular is to serve Germany's security interests. The decisions on export applications usually happen entrenched in German bureaucracy, invisible to the public. Politically delicate decisions are transferred to the BSR. While the government's major politicians are far from anonymous, the council's proceedings and decisions do remain secret. Thus arms exports are handled untransparently. This has been found to be perfectly legal. However, whether this is appropriate or a reason for public outrage is a matter for debate. A review of the events of the MENA uprisings with an emphasis on 2011 and German involvement will now follow.

5.3 Historical context in 2011 and thereafter

I explained in the introduction why I deem *Arab Spring* to be a rather inappropriate term for the series of events taking place in the Middle East and North Africa. Thus I choose the term *MENA uprisings* as a geographically equally precise but less judgmental alternative. It encompasses the extensive political shifts which occurred in countries of the MENA region. Naturally, some shifts were more profound than others and many of them are, as of today, far from consolidation. Some authoritarian governments executed reforms and remained in power. Others remained in power without considerable change. Yet others were deposed after many years in power and replaced. Countries in which the uprisings led to revolution have, by now, experienced everything from consolidation to civil war and chaos.

Tunisia

Regardless of the term used, *Arab Spring* or *MENA uprisings*, it is generally agreed that their beginning can be placed in Tunisia in December of 2010. On the 14th of January in 2011, after weeks of protests, longtime President *Zine El Abidine Ben Ali* was ousted from his position. Events in the country remained comparably orderly and non-violent so that international attention very soon shifted to other countries. A year later the German government expressed great optimism about Tunisia's democratic potential. A visit by Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs *Guido Westerwelle* (FDP) in the year's beginning was accompanied by manifold hopes for the consolidation of Tunisia's young democratic aspirations as well as promises of support. He explicitly stressed the legitimacy of Islamic-democratic parties just as there are Christian-democratic parties in European countries (AA 09.01.2012). Several international observers expressed concern over the moderate Islamist *Ennahda* party. It went on become the strongest political force during the elections for a constituent assembly which eventually took place in July 2012. However, in early 2012 the party had already expressed its willingness to not make the Islamic *Sharia* the basis of Tunisian law. Researcher EL OUAZGHARI remarked the groundlessness of worries of Tunisia taking an Islamist turn as early as 2011 (El Ouazghari 2011, 11). Later assessments of the overall

democratic potential of Tunisia have at least been cautiously optimistic (Akar Yüksel et al. 2013, 325-326; Ryan 2014, 21). Tunisia adopted a distinctly liberal constitution in early 2014 (Die Zeit 2014a). In late 2014, parliamentary elections took place again. These had been prepared by a non-party government after the *Ennahda* government had resigned after protests in the year's beginning. After these elections *Ennahda* soon admitted its defeat to the secular party *Nidaa Tounes* (Guardian 2014a). As of late 2014, Tunisia still seems strongly on the way to democratic consolidation.

Egypt

During January of 2011 protests against *Hosni Mubarak*, the President of Egypt, began. In the plenary debate on the 9th of February, Minister *Westerwelle* and other parliamentarians of the governing coalition were unambiguous in their verbal support for the protesters. Parliamentarians of the opposition parties joined this support. Minister *Westerwelle* held that there was a duty to intervene in some way for the sake of human rights, even if it touched on the domestic affairs of a sovereign state (BT 17/89, 9963-78). Politicians of opposition parties criticised that the German government by then had not called for the Egyptian president's resignation. This accusation was countered by government coalition politicians with the principle of non-interference. The government's actions otherwise would undoubtedly clarify which side Germany was on (PP 17/89, 9975-77).

President *Mubarak* was forced from office in mid-February after weeks of protests and attempts to suppress them. He had proven himself unable to respond to the demand of Egyptians in a way other than violence. This inability, shaped by decades of insular elitism, had only reinforced the protesters' determination (Heiss 2012, 168-169). He was placed under house arrest to prevent him from fleeing the country, considering the criminal charges he was facing. Trials began later during the year and are still not finally concluded. *Mubarak* is still under house arrest.

In January 2012 the decades-old state of emergency was partially lifted. Minister *Westerwelle* visited the country that same month and expressed his conviction of the compatibility of Islam with democracy and plurality. With regard to Egypt's Coptic community he emphasised the importance of religious freedom and asked for patience concerning which political forces would prove to be the dominant ones in the upcoming elections (AA 30.01.2012). Due to a perceived lack of speed in the transfer of power from the military to an elected president, many Egyptian citizens began protesting again. After a first round of elections in late May, the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate *Mohamed Morsi* won the runoff by a small margin in mid-June. At first it seemed that optimistic predictions of the Brotherhood's democratic aspirations would hold. However, on the 22nd of November, President *Morsi* provoked new intense protests by granting himself powers to protect the nation. Furthermore, he even granted himself legislative powers perceived as excessive by more liberal and secular forces. Concessions were made for the draft constitution in December, the referendum on which was eventually moved by one week to the 22nd of December to pay reference to the severe protesting (NY Times 2012).

After the protests never fully ceased, the Egyptian military intervened in the summer of 2013. Its then-leader,

Field Marshal *Abdel Fattah el-Sisi*, ended his military career to run for presidency in 2014. He eventually won it and was sworn into office on the 8th of June. At least temporarily, the military has reimposed its hegemony over the political processes in Egypt (de Smet 2014, 36-37). The struggles in Egypt between the first protesters of early 2011, the military and the Muslim Brotherhood seemingly illustrate well a struggle between three competing forces in the MENA region at large already identified in 2011. This is the struggle between a pluralism which champions democracy, the older forces of secular authoritarianism and Islamism (Saikal 2011, 542).

Libya

A few days after President *Mubarak's* resignation the world community's focus shifted to Libya. Protests against Libyan leader *Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi* began. His violent countermeasures soon radicalised his opponents. They also triggered consensus among Western leaders, including the German government, to act. On the 26th of February they agreed on the necessity of quick sanctions and *Gaddafi's* resignation (BR 26.02.2011a, 26.02.2011b). A day later the German government expressly approved of the unanimous passage of sanctions in Security Council Resolution 1970 (UNSC 2011a) against the Libyan government, including a thorough arms embargo. Chancellor *Merkel* reportedly interpreted it as "a strong signal to Colonel Gaddafi and other despots that violations of human rights will not go unpunished"¹⁷, calling for his resignation (BR 27.02.2011). As for the arms embargo, questions about its merits remain since arms embargoes employed on short notice are not an effective means of acute crisis management (Fehl 2011, 11-12).

Given the escalating violence in Libya, the German government froze assets of the Libyan leadership in German banks (BMW 10.03.2011) and called for further sanctions against the Libyan leadership. However, it remained cautious on the option of establishing a no-fly zone, calling for a mandate by the UN and support of the Arab League (AL) in every action taken (AA 09.03.2011). The protocol of the plenary session of the Bundestag of the 16th of March is very instructive in this respect: CDU/CSU and FDP, the governing parties, were skeptical of a no-fly zone as they feared it may pull more countries into the conflict and cause even more casualties. The Left rejected the idea in congruence with a general opposition to military deployments and German participation in any war or warlike situation. SPD and B90G emphasised that supporting the resolution would not inevitably lead to the deployment of German personnel. They claimed the resolution's necessity under the norm of *Responsibility to Protect* (R2P). Yet the parties were not always in complete internal unity on this difficult question. There was, however, agreement among parties that the AL's position was not helpful (PP 17/095, 10813-32). The AL called for a no-fly zone over Libya but at the same time rejected western intervention into sovereign Arab states.¹⁸

¹⁷The quotation in its original German language: "Der einstimmige Beschluss des VN-Sicherheitsrates ist ein starkes Signal an Oberst Gaddafi und andere Despoten, dass Menschenrechtsverletzungen nicht ungesühnt bleiben."

¹⁸The influence by the AL on whether or not to intervene militarily in Libya has sparked discussions of a shift away from sovereign consent to regional consent in the application of the R2P norm. The fact that this discussion accompanies the overall first application of last resort military means under the norm is remarkable. However, in the case of Libya this finding only seems to hold for the AL. The African Union on the opposite failed to react to the Libyan crisis with one voice and to be taken seriously by the actors involved. See Glanville 2013, 340; Kasaija 2013, 132-133.

On the following evening, Resolution 1973 was passed (UNSC 2011b). Among other features, it established the no-fly zone enforced by NATO. After its passing in reaction to the Libyan leadership's failure to implement Resolution 1970, Minister *Westerwelle* still emphasised the necessity of a political solution, dismissing a solely military approach. The press statement does not particularly mention the abstention of the German government in the vote on Resolution 1973. The parties in parliament repeated the same arguments described in the above paragraph (PP 17/097, 11137-52).¹⁹ German political scientist MÜLLER, director of PRIF, judges Germany's abstention to be "a moral and political mistake which has a negative long-term effect on Germany's position in the world."²⁰ With reference to the political alliance based on a community of values that NATO is and of which the German government claims to be part, he regards it as harmful to sheer out of that very community (Müller 2011, 10). Germany's abstention has less drastically been noted as a clear manifestation of self-interest in the face of more pressing issues in 2011. It remained yet to be seen whether that abstention marked the beginning of a new trend of German reluctance facing NATO operations or military operations of its close allies in general (Miskimmon 2012, 404-406).

Eventually, Minister *Westerwelle's* call for a ceasefire and a political process went unheard (AA 29.03.2011). Fighting in Libya continued while the no-fly zone developed into aerial support for the rebels by mainly French, British and American NATO forces until early autumn. At last *Gaddafi* was apprehended and killed by rebels in his hometown of Sirte in October. Chancellor *Merkel* announced the 20th of October to be an important day, finally marking a new beginning for the Libyan people. She announced Germany's support to Libya on its way to democracy, rule of law and national reconciliation (BR 20.10.2011).

In 2012, Libya was far from reaching consolidation. The first elections since the end of *al-Gaddafi's* rule did take place that year, on the 7th of July. Following these elections, "the country's first free and fair polls in decades" the National Transitional Council handed over power to the General National Congress, to this day Libya's legislative body. Power was handed over peacefully, although at that time there was still fighting occurring in other parts of the country (BBC 2012). Due to the heterogenous society of the Libyan nation, shaped by old tribal structures and various militia forces refusing disarmament, the country is far from having reached internal peace (BBC 2013). The most prominent reminder to other states abroad that peace was and is far from assured possibly occurred on the 11th and 12th of September 2012. These days saw the attack by unknown armed forces on the US embassy in the capital of Tripoli. Four of the embassy's employees, including US Ambassador *John Christopher Stevens*, were killed during those attacks.. Ambassador *Stevens* was the first US Ambassador killed in service since 1988. In a somewhat sadly ironical coincidence of history *Mustafa Abushagur* was elected as the first Prime Minister-designate on the same day. Although he subsequently failed to get congressional approval for his proposed cabinet, Chancellor *Merkel* congratulated him on his election. She announced Germany's support to Libya when making its way to become a democratic constitutional state (BR

¹⁹The conservative government and the most left-wing party being in unison against the two other left-wing parties is a rare occasion and worth mentioning simply for that. This is a clear example that opposition parties are in no way bound by an informal coalition against the federal government.

²⁰The quotation in its original German language: "Die Haltung der Bundesregierung im Fall Libyen ist ein moralischer und politischer Fehler, der negative Langzeitwirkungen auf die Position Deutschlands in der Welt hat.", see Müller 2011, 1.

19.09.2012). Furthermore, in October 2013, Libyan Prime Minister *Ali Zeidan* was kidnapped by militia forces only to be released shortly thereafter in what was appropriately called a “show of force” by the perpetrators (NY Times 2013).

Nevertheless, there were still cautiously optimistic assessments of the situation in 2013 which saw the high degree of Libyan self-ownership as positive (Wehrey 2013, 120). Another side to self-ownership arguably is the steady overall decline in attention by the international community to events in Libya since 2011. Since, facing manifold uncertainties, the prospects for consolidation have become increasingly dim. In fact in 2014, critics pointed towards the West’s neglect of post-conflict reconstruction in the country following its no-fly zone turned air campaign. *The Guardian* judged that “[t]hree years later, Libya is still as much of a mess as ever.” (Guardian 2014b).

Syria

Soon after protests in Libya had escalated into a civil war in 2011, similar developments began to shake Syria. In reaction to recent use of violence by government forces, Minister *Westerwelle* condemned the latter in the name of the German Cabinet in late April. Citizens’ rights on free expression of opinion and assembly needed to be upheld. Furthermore, he asked the Syrian government to finally become receptive to protesters’ demands and react to the urging pleas by the international community (AA 23.04.2011). The statement only three days later contained little news. If President *Bashar al-Assad* was to continue reacting with violence towards peaceful protesters, consequences would be necessary. Minister *Westerwelle* suggested the Syrian case to be looked into by the UNSC as well as the UN Human Rights Council. He called upon the Syrian government to opt for immediate and credible reforms and suggested the EU to review its relations to Syria as well (AA 26.04.2011).

Subsequently, the EU passed its first sanctions on the 10th of May, including an arms embargo and travel and assets limitations against important representatives of the Syrian government. It also urged “the Syrian authorities to respond to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people by launching an inclusive and genuine national dialogue and by implementing without delay and through a concrete timetable, meaningful political reforms”, seeing it as the only way to peace, democracy and stability for the country (EC 23.05.2011). Researchers of SIPRI pointed out the fact that apart from UNSC resolution 1970 on Libya and EU and AL embargoes on Syria no other multilateral arms embargoes were imposed on countries affected by the MENA uprisings (Bromley et al. 2012, 275). In June, Minister *Westerwelle* expressed his hopes for a plain reaction by the UNSC and a quick passage of a resolution proposed by UK²¹, France, Portugal and Germany on the 8th of June. He called for an immediate end to all violence against Syrians who merely demanded their legitimate human and civil rights (AA 14.06.2011). Two months later, the governments of the UK, France and Germany again demanded an end to all violence. Simultaneously they expressed their conviction that President *al-Assad* and his government have lost all legitimacy and called for yet further sanctions by the EU (BR 18.08.2011). While the civil war in

²¹ Actually the term *Great Britain* was used in this press release. Judging from this and other sources it becomes apparent that the terms *Great Britain* and *United Kingdom* are used synonymously and interchangeably by both BR and AA. Considering *Great Britain* to be a geographic term, it is not known to me what representatives of *Northern Ireland* think about this circumstance.

Syria continued to rage with ever increasing intensity, there were no more statements by the German Cabinet related to it in 2011.

In 2012, President *Bashar al-Assad's* forces and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), composed of rebels and deserters, clashed continuously. Syria's smaller neighbour Lebanon, under detrimental influence of Syrian hegemony since decades, ran the risk of being dragged into the Syrian civil war (Hourani 2013, 39-40). This was the case although Lebanon had maneuvered through the early stages of the MENA uprisings rather well. This, however, may be due to the fact that Lebanon has not enjoyed internal peace for years, as there are forces now who might expect benefit from a surge of sectarian conflict (Hourani 2013, 51-52). As for Syria, cities like Homs or Aleppo could be seen in the media on an almost daily basis, being the scene of bombings and attacks of various kinds. In the midst of all this, the civilian population of Syria had to bear the most. Libya had been a case for the international norm of R2P as clear as only possible. Other than in that case the international community - and above all the UNSC - was divided on the Syrian issue. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, as permanent members of the Council, vetoed all initiatives for robust resolutions against the Syrian leadership, pointing to national sovereignty. In connection with the ongoing violence, Minister *Westerwelle* called on those two countries in early 2012 to finally support serious sanctions against the Syrian government. Moreover, he expressed support for a plan of action proposed by the AL which included the resignation of President *al-Assad* and his government and the subsequent organisation of elections by a transitional government of national unity (AA 31.01.2012). Depending on one's perspective one may call the unrealistic premises of such proposals either a sign of perseverance or of mere politicking.

Furthermore, the focus on Russia and China shall not conceal skepticism elsewhere.²² Concerning the R2P norm which may be applied to justify interventionist sanctions like in Libya, there is a considerable amount of skepticism in a wide circle of nations. Said skepticism clearly goes beyond the Syrian case. It has been articulated by many developing countries since many years, fearing a backdoor to a new colonialism through constraint of national sovereignty. The result however was the eventual failure of the international community, embodied by the UN. Events taking place in Syria were subsequently not even condemned, let alone robust measures against them taken. In a reading which one may call the *Western* one, it is easy to judge Russia and China as ruthlessly pursuing own strategic interests for the detriment of the Syrian population.²³ However, researchers DEMBINSKI and MUMFORD of PRIF point to the damage dealt to the *R2P* norm by the Libyan case in 2011. The tension between moral claims and the universal validity of the norm on the one hand and the particular interests of those states enforcing it on the other hand surfaced in the Libyan case. Its consequences have direct repercussions for the Syrian case. Due to the Libyan case, they argue, Russia and China can veto far-reaching resolutions in the UNSC without having to fear damages to their international reputation, other than

²²Russia is by far not the only country that was found to follow very distinct own interests in Syria. Without even delving into possible interests of Western powers, its direct neighbours and regional powers Turkey and Iran equally follow their own agenda. This had become all the more obvious in 2014 and the international fight against the Islamist militia called Islamic State. The number of recent publications on the issue well illustrates the prominence of foreign power interests in Syria. See Mohammed 2011, Taşpınar 2012, Charap 2013, Baş 2013, Allison 2013.

²³On the Russian-Syrian strategic partnership see Bromley et al. 2012, 276.

in 2011 (Dembinski et al. 2012, 2). Researcher and former UN official THAKUR, one of the intellectual fathers of R2P, explicitly wrote that “[a]lthough successful, the Libyan operation proved particularly controversial among the emerging powers, and the price of exceeding the mandate there has been paid by Syrians” (Thakur 2013, 61).²⁴

In an additional alternative reading, one may also point to the resulting convenience for those critical *Western* powers such as the three other permanent members of the UNSC France, the UK and the USA. Their governments did not need to deploy forces once again, a step that usually seems to be at odds with domestic popular preferences. Simultaneously an explanation was at the ready that passed responsibility on to other powers. The greatly reduced degree of activity towards the Syrian issue by the German Cabinet is indicated by the smaller amount of statements concerning it. After several members of the inner circle of Syria’s government were killed by a bombing attack carried out by the FSA, Minister *Westerwelle* described it as a direct result of the government’s brutal conduct in the conflict. He called on Russia and China to embrace its political security and human sympathy to enable the UNSC to adopt robust, non-military sanctions against the Syrian leadership. At the same time he appealed to the Syrian opposition for restraint (AA 19.07.2012).

The civil war dragged on through 2013, gaining in complexity. The fragmentation of the Syrian state went so far as to increase the importance of ethnic, religious and linguistic belonging opposite to national belonging. This fragmentation among the manifold societal subgroups of Syria will further challenge a common Syrian identity (Tokmajyan 2013). Such a development can only make the conflict more difficult to resolve. President *al-Assad* made only one concession in 2013, otherwise maintaining his power. He agreed to allow the international community to confiscate and destroy Syria’s arsenal of chemical weapons after an apparent attack on civilians in August 2013.

In 2014 the civil war was made ever more complicated with the rise of the Islamic State (IS), an Islamist militia challenging the sovereignties of both Syria and Iraq. Amidst all of the conflict’s uncertainties, the gradual strengthening of Islamic forces opposite to the secular FSA had seemingly been one of few certainties (Zisser 2012, 109-110; Lesch 2013, 104-105). As of the writing of this thesis, the military intervention by an international coalition to support domestic forces against IS led by the USA was still ongoing with no imminent end in sight.

Other MENA countries in upheaval

The countries just discussed above were of course by far not the only ones shaken by unrest during early 2011 and later on. They were only the most important outside of the MENA region in that events there were seemingly the most dramatic and most thoroughly covered by the media. Comparably minor protests nevertheless occurred in several other countries.

One of these countries was **Morocco**. Unlike other countries more severely shaken by the MENA uprisings

²⁴The case of R2P, Libya and Syria has become a lively topic among experts. General agreement can be found on the notion that the Libyan case did not help the R2P norm as such. Similarly, assessments that the Libyan intervention amounts to the establishment of the norm on the international scene are deemed overly optimistic. See Morris 2013, 1280.

it had already engaged in certain reforms in years preceding those events. Since the 1990s, the Moroccan monarchy had allowed “political competition without exposing the regime itself to contestation and touching upon the distribution of real power.” (Van Hüllen 2012, 131). In summary, this approach of liberalisation without the necessity of democratisation ensured the monarchy’s survival of the uprisings. By means of further reforms it was even able to increase its legitimacy (Van Hüllen 2012, 131). Through this long-standing process of liberalisation, the monarchy had become a widely accepted arbiter. While the monarchy seems to have emerged unscathed from the MENA uprisings, it possibly has enabled further developments in the future (Dalmasso 2012, 229-230). For now at least, Morocco remains stable and largely unchanged.

A similar finding can be made for **Algeria**. The country bordering Tunisia, the origin of the MENA uprisings, is ruled in an authoritarian manner by its President *Abdelaziz Bouteflika* since 1999. With quick reactions and new legislations on representation, political parties and elections his government was able to remain in power. Moreover, the state of emergency, in force for 19 years, was lifted in early 2011. While criticism of President *Bouteflika*’s authoritarian conduct remains, he was able to sufficiently appease his critics so that his regime was not overthrown.

Another country that experienced unrest was **Yemen**. Equally beginning in early 2011 it was affected by protests against President *Ali Abdullah Saleh*. Since 1990 he had installed a system of elite patronage while large shares of the population lived in poverty. Despite this fact, President *Saleh*’s regime was noted as an important regional partner in the fight against terrorism (Scahill 2011, 11-14). In face of the protests and an attempt for his life that left him injured, *Saleh* was taken in by Saudi Arabia.²⁵ He passed on governmental powers to his Vice President who was sworn in as interim President in February 2012. Despite this resignation it was still deemed possible even in 2013 that he influenced events in the country due to his long-established system of patronage (Dingli 2013, 99). The political turmoil and government violence against the Yemeni populations as accompanied by a surge of fighting between the Yemeni military and *Al Qaeda on the Arabian peninsula* (Allansson et al. 21-23). Accordingly, Yemen is still marked by violent outbursts and is currently undergoing transition to becoming a federal republic in order to account for the country’s manifold lines of conflict, tribal and otherwise.

Even the generally stable royal regime of **Saudi Arabia** experienced popular protests in 2011. The country’s rulers certainly recognised the potential of the MENA uprisings and the danger that popular uprisings posed to their family’s position. Measures taken by the rulers were violent, yet unlike other countries a longer uprising did not develop, let alone a civil war. The Saudi Arabian monarchy “mobilized both its tremendous wealth and its capacity for violence to crush democratic insurgencies at home and around the region”, its response thus being “unremittingly hostile” (Jones 2011a, 58). In more of a footnote to events in Egypt, Libya and Syria, Saudi Arabian and Qatari troops supported the rulers of Bahrain to regain control of protests there. Saudi Arabia emerged overall unchanged in 2011. In the long run, however, the Saudi Arabian leadership’s relentless

²⁵This readiness by Saudi Arabia to provide shelter to President *Saleh* to calm the Yemeni conflict was referenced in the German debate later on. See section 6.1.

opposition to change may very well prove detrimental (Jones 2011b, 40). Despite this, recent shifts within the royal family were pointed out, even if they were not triggered by the MENA uprisings (Taheri 2012, 141-143).

In the beginning of 2011 the counterrevolutionary intervention into Bahrain is referenced in the German parliament's debates. In his governmental statement on the 16th of March, Minister *Westerwelle* called for restraint, an end of violence and a serious dialogue between government and opposition (PP 17/95, 10815). Parliamentarians of government parties as well as opposition parties are in agreement in their concern over Saudi Arabia's and Qatar's military intervention. SPD and B90G pointed to the new and additional level of escalation that Saudi Arabia's and the Gulf Cooperation Council's actions constituted. In light of these actions, the CDU emphasised the fact that the Saudi kingdom had so far undertaken nothing to protect the freedom movements in Libya (PP 17/95, 10820). While it seems unlikely that he indeed expected such an engagement by Saudi Arabia it is revealing of the kingdom's priorities. According to the SPD, the Saudi Arabian regime forfeited a lot of credit through its actions (PP 17/95, 10829).

Chapter 6

The debate on German arms exports into the MENA region

Above I provided the historical context of the MENA uprisings. Due to the topic's complexity I did of course by no means exhaust it with such a brief summary. I largely limited it to the extent that Germany and German politics were involved and focused on the year 2011. This is necessary in order to reasonably investigate the ensuing German debate surrounding the MENA uprisings and arms exports into the region.

6.1 The government's foreign policy applied in 2011

In the beginning of 2011, the first weeks of the MENA uprisings, the Federal Republic of Germany made its fifth entry into the UNSC as a non-permanent member. Hence, on the 2nd of January, Minister *Westerwelle* announced Germany's awareness of its international responsibility. At the same time he emphasised its "culture of military restraint". He declared that Germany would a reliable, responsible and dedicated partner (AA 02.01.2011).

A few weeks into the events in Egypt, Chancellor *Merkel* rather clearly chose sides. She asked rhetorically "who would we be if we did not say that we agree with those people who express what is upsetting them?"¹ Chancellor *Merkel* demanded that the Egyptian government protect and uphold freedom of speech and freedom of press while she expressed her satisfaction with the, until then, relatively peaceful course of events (BR 05.02.2011). The speech in which she made those remarks was given on the 5th of February 2011 on the 47th *Munich Security Conference*, only six days before Egyptian President *Mubarak* resigned from office. Chancellor *Merkel* limited her notion that change had to be shaped by pointing to the failure of exporting *Westminster Democracy* to certain countries. She did not mention but apparently implied the cases of Iraq and Afghanistan.

¹The quotation in its original German language: "Wer wären wir denn, wenn wir nicht sagen würden, dass wir auf der Seite dieser Menschen stehen, die das ausdrücken, was sie beschwert?"; see BR 05.02.2011

Both are states which are still far from being functioning and independent democracies, despite the international community's efforts. Thus she called for the acceptance of compromises and limits in efforts of democratisation or the export of *Western* values.

However, she identified "a red line beyond which we must not make any more compromises, the United Nations Convention on Human Rights."² As the world will not be reshaped based on the *UN Convention on Human Rights* by tomorrow, Chancellor *Merkel* consequentially called for a permanent focus on human rights and shared principles, "in everything we do and in every kind of cooperation we maintain [...]" In an interesting insertion she suggested to the international audience the question whether this has always been done.³

She addressed the tension between a foreign policy bound by values and the task to maintain security and stability:⁴

*"Ich will deshalb auch deutlich sagen: Wir sind auf der einen Seite verpflichtet, wertgebundene Außenpolitik zu betreiben und auf der anderen Seite sind wir natürlich auch verpflichtet, für Sicherheit und für Stabilität zu sorgen. Beides steht in vielen Fällen in einem gewissen Spannungsverhältnis zueinander. Ich glaube nur, man darf nie Kompromisse schließen, die das eine, nämlich die Achtung der Menschenrechte, völlig außer Betracht lassen."*⁵

Federal Chancellor ANGELA MERKEL, on the 5th of February 2011

Several remarks regarding this statement are necessary: 1) The tension between human rights and security and stability is not further addressed and remains obscure, just as it does in any of the documents discussed before. Thus, one is left to one's own considerations. If human rights on the one hand and stability and security on the other hand are in tension this has to mean that progress of one side may amount to the detriment of the other side. Given that a stable international community depends on stable sovereign states, this can only mean that the promotion of human rights may endanger the stability of some states. From that can be deducted that human rights are not a major concern in the current shape of stability. of these states 2) Given the quotation's last sentence it seems that there could hardly be a clearer prioritisation of human rights opposite mere interests. Yet again, it is not clear what the word "entirely" ("völlig") in this context exactly entails. One could provocatively ask whether compromises that *non-entirely* disregard respect for human rights are acceptable. Human rights and their promotion are claimed to be the most important criterion in determining which course in foreign policy is acceptable. However, as discussed in section 5.1 security and stability are the end of German foreign policy. If they are in tension, a decision between two options has to be made. In the

²The quotation in its original German language: "Diesbezüglich ist die rote Linie, ab der wir keine Kompromisse machen können, die Konvention der Menschenrechte der Vereinten Nationen."; see BR 05.02.2011

³The quotation in its original German language: "Das bedeutet, dass wir bei allem, was wir tun - dabei müssen wir uns auch fragen, ob wir das immer ausreichend getan haben -, und bei jeder Form von Zusammenarbeit, die wir pflegen, die Menschenrechte und unsere Prinzipien, die wir teilen, immer im Blick haben."; see BR 05.02.2011

⁴Compare this to the REB in section 5.2.

⁵The quotation in my own translation: "I thus want to emphasize: on the one hand we are obliged to pursue a value-bound foreign policy and on the other hand we are of course also obliged to provide for security and stability. In many cases they stand in tension towards one another. I think though, one may never strike compromises which entirely disregard the former, the respect for human rights"; see BR 05.02.2011.

case study, this decision could be between permission to export and denial of such permission. 3) The quotation suggests that there are always such compromises that could be struck. As I already pointed out when discussing the *PolG* in section 5.2, this is not always possible. There is no middle ground between *yes* and *no* when it comes to certain decisions.

Chancellor *Merkel* continued by exemplifying the issue just pointed out in 1). Some threats cannot be solved by Germany and its primary allies alone. For countering issues such as international terrorism, partners are needed. Of those partners with not fully favourable human rights records, she named Russia, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Egypt. According to the Chancellor, partnerships especially with advanced developing countries are not only needed in order to enable Germany and other industrial nations to maintain security; Chancellor *Merkel* held that they are obliged to take over more responsibility for security and foreign policy, based on the fact that these countries are economically catching up with industrial nations (BR 05.02.2011). She remained blurry as to which kind of security and even more for whom she referred to. The complexity of meanings of security was indicated in section 5.1. Even more, it seems questionable whether advancing developing countries would maintain security precisely in the way the community of established industrial nations would envision it.

In contrast to Chancellor *Merkel's* more sober reference to the tension between values and stability, one should regard Minister *Westerwelle's* governmental statement of the 9th of February. Only four days after Chancellor *Merkel*, he stated that a combination of a value-oriented and an interest-guided foreign policy was no longer impossible. He made this statement explicitly with regard to the universal respect for human rights (PP 17/89, 9963). It is unclear whether this was owed to the rather ceremonial character of a governmental statement before parliament. An MdB of the CDU clarified in the same plenary session that the simultaneous employment of interest politics and value politics was a necessity. While he stated the existence of non-democratic polities as a fact, he maintained that not having constructive relationships with regimes such as the People's Republic of China would be "irresponsible" (PP 17/89, 9973). In the basic notion that one also has to negotiate with rogue states, he is even joined by an MdB of the Left (PP 17/95, 10823).

To put arms exports into the MENA region in the framework of German foreign policy into perspective, Chancellor *Merkel's* speech in early September 2011 at the *Körber Foundation* is of importance. Some of the theses she presented there, are in line with arguments presented in February at the *47th Munich Security Conference*. She argued that Germany could not, like any other country, solve its problems alone. Thus it continuously based its security policy within the transatlantic alliance with the USA. Again, she pointed out as necessary an increasing engagement and more willingness to assume responsibility by more newly industrialised countries. Chancellor *Merkel* emphasised the EU's increasing importance in matters of crisis management but admonished that its *CFSP* remained short of expectations. Concerning this issue, she found that "European politics can only succeed if member states, their governments, parliaments and the public are included and their interests considered." She proceeded by stating that this was especially true for foreign and security policies, naturally a core of national sovereignty.⁶ Above all, one shall note her referral to the importance of taking the

⁶The quotation in its original German language: "Europäische Politik kann nur gelingen, wenn die Mitgliedstaaten, ihre Regierungen,

public's interest into consideration. Whether it refers to the public's articulated interest or interests assigned to it by other actors, remains unclear.

Saudi Arabia was explicitly commended for granting refuge to the heads of government of Tunisia and Yemen earlier during the year as reactions to events of the Arab Spring (see section 5.3). This is in line with an earlier joint statement by the heads of government of France, Germany, the UK, Italy and Spain, thanking the government of Saudi Arabia for hospitalising Yemeni President *Saleh*. The statement also asked the conflicting parties in Yemen to respect the ceasefire initiated by the Saudi Arabian King (BR 05.06.2011). The most debated part of Chancellor *Merkel's* speech follows. If one, as a country, was reluctant to engage in a conflict oneself, then words of encouragement to those countries which are willing to engage would be insufficient. The German Chancellor elaborated:

“Wir müssen die Staaten, die bereit sind, sich zu engagieren, auch dazu befähigen. Ich sage ausdrücklich: Das schließt auch den Export von Waffen mit ein - dies selbstverständlich nur nach klaren und weithin anerkannten Prinzipien. Wir sollten aber versuchen, einen Schritt weiterzugehen: Wenn wir uns im Atlantischen Bündnis einig sind, dass die NATO nicht alle Konflikte lösen kann und dass den aufstrebenden Schwellenländern und Regionalorganisationen mehr Verantwortung zukommt, dann sollten wir im Bündnis bei den Rüstungsexporten auch schrittweise zu einer gemeinsamen Politik kommen. Eine solche gemeinsame Politik muss und wird immer restriktiv sein. Sie muss und wird immer und in jedem Fall mit einer Außenpolitik in Einklang zu bringen sein, die auf die Achtung der Menschenrechte ausgerichtet ist. Denn sonst wird eine wertegeleitete Politik unmöglich.”⁷

Federal Chancellor ANGELA MERKEL, on the 9th of September 2011

Some examples were given. Sanctions against Belarus, Iran, Myanmar and Cuba are presented as part of a value-guided foreign policy. In the same vein, Chancellor *Merkel* maintained that in the face of growing political and economic cooperation with China and Russia, no meeting ever passed without addressing matters of human rights and flaws in their legal systems. It may be interpreted as instructive that the only country mentioned from the MENA region was Iran, a pariah state. The deficient human rights performance of other countries in the region is not mentioned.

From the upper quotation by Chancellor *Merkel* the so-called *Merkel Doctrine* was derived. According to a group of journalists of *Der Spiegel* the doctrine includes the very reluctant deployment of German personnel to crisis regions in exchange for a more willing supply of arms to certain partner countries, thus enabling them to

Parlamente und die Öffentlichkeit einbezogen und ihre Interessen berücksichtigt werden. Dies gilt auch und besonders für die Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, die natürlich auch zum Kernbereich nationaler Souveränität zählt.”; see BR 09.09.2011.

⁷The quotation in my own translation: “We have to enable those states which are willing to engage. I say explicitly: this does also include the export of arms – self-evidently only following clear and widely acknowledged principles. We should try to go one step further though: if we agree within the Atlantic alliance that NATO cannot solve all conflicts and that more responsibility befits aspiring newly industrialised countries, then we should also gradually work towards a common policy regarding arms exports within the alliance. Such a common policy has to and always will be restrictive. It has to and in any case will be conciliated with a foreign policy that is geared towards respect for human rights. Otherwise value-guided politics is rendered impossible.”; see BR 09.09.2011.

provide for peace and security themselves (Spiegel 2012b). The journalists saw a link to Germany's abstention in the vote on UNSC Resolution 1973. They argued that that "[s]ince their refusal to politically and militarily support the war waged by the West and its Arab allies against former Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, the Germans are seen as shirkers" (Spiegel 2012c). However, opinions differ. German political scientist KRAUSE does not identify any significant change in arms export policies between Chancellor *Merkel's* second Cabinet and earlier German Cabinets. He argues that all German governments have permitted arms exports for diverse reasons while none of them has ever given up the politics of restraint (Krause 2013). As the publication years of both opinions suggest, the matter was still of importance after 2011. To whichever position one may be prone to subscribe, the German Bundestag possesses comprehensive powers with regard to the deployment of military forces. Hence no German government can deploy the country's armed forces or modify their initial mandate against the will of parliament (Dieterich et al. 2003, 22-24).⁸ This clearly limits the German government's influence in comparison to various other governments, likely making the refusal of deployment the domestically less complicated option.

Either way, it is a fact that Germany's abstention in the vote on the UNSC's resolution on Libya ensured that no German personnel had to be deployed. Whatever the real motivation was, apparently Chancellor *Merkel* months later still felt the need to justify Germany's abstention in the vote. Indeed she emphasised that at no point Germany's abstention in the UNSC vote had meant neutrality. However, she did not offer any additional arguments for this interpretation.⁹ Stating the obvious, an abstention tends to be interpreted as neutrality by most observers. In order to appear clearly non-neutral, one is left with the options of approval and rejection.

Another small difference between the speeches in February and September respectively carries considerable meaning. While the term used in February 2011 was still *value-bound policy*, it had changed to *value-guided policy* in September of the same year.¹⁰ One can fathom that the former term encompasses more firmness than the latter. A policy that is merely guided by values should prove to be more bendable than a policy that is bound by values. This small yet instructive detail was not pointed out even in the article proclaiming the existence of the *Merkel Doctrine*.

Summing up, in September 2011 the German government showed general approval of arms exports to any country identified as a partner. Several countries with deficient human rights records were mentioned. Some of these underwent criticism while others were commended. Among the latter ones was Saudi Arabia which was spared from explicit criticism. It is in connection with these facts that the debate about German arms exports since 2011 and particularly in July of that year needs to be seen.

⁸The cited article is a survey on parliamentary control powers of the deployment of armed forces. It was conducted among 25 European countries with regard to participation in the US-led international coalition that invaded Iraq in 2003.

⁹The decisive quotation in its original German language: "Im Übrigen bedeutete unsere Enthaltung im UN-Sicherheitsrat zu keinem Zeitpunkt Neutralität."; BR 09.09.2011.

¹⁰Compare "wertgebundene Politik" and "wertgeleitete Politik".

6.2 January to June 2011

In February 2011 the parliamentary opposition in the German Bundestag became active on arms-related issues, half a year before the purported Saudi Arabia deal surfaced in the media. Several interpellations by the opposition parties concerned Saudi Arabia immediately. With an interpellation, the Left demanded information on German exports of arms to the Near East and North Africa. Citing evidence of German-made water cannons deployed in Egypt against protesters, the triggering of this interpellation by events of the MENA uprisings appears to be rather obvious. Accordingly the party cited as a main reason for its inquiry the possibility that German arms could be used for internal repression and grave violations of human rights. Besides being primarily a great danger for the lives of people in those respective countries, the parliamentary group saw the entire region's stability put into danger (DS 17/4824, 1). It furthermore asked why export applications regarding the MENA countries currently in upheaval have not been put on halt (DS 17/4824, 3). To this question and when asked on which resources the decisions on export applications are based, the government referred, hardly surprising, to *EU CP 2008/944/CFSP* and the *PolG*, which were discussed in section 5.2 (DS 17/5007, 6). This turned out to be a recurring pattern.

In April, B90G criticised the late release of the *REB* and the lack of prompt information of parliament and public. In the more detailed questions the party inquired about the export of a small arms factory to Saudi Arabia and the *particular foreign and security policy interest* linked to it. German small arms manufacturer Heckler & Koch (H&K) had been allowed to establish respective premises in the country (DS 17/5599).¹¹ The government responded that the requirement of a *particular foreign and security policy interest* did not apply to production equipment. Moreover, essential statistics for the *REB* were still not available (DS 17/5721). B90G continued by asking about the application of human rights criteria in export decisions (DS 17/5865). The government cited several EU documents and the two main documents just mentioned above. It did not see any problems with the current set of rules and thus no need for changes (DS 17/6045).

In May, the Left inquired about the long-standing deployment of members of the German Federal Police for purposes regarding the training of Saudi Arabian border troops (DS 17/5846, DS 17/6102). Defence technology manufacturer EADS was in the process of building a border guard system on the country's northern desert border to Iraq. The government's response triggered a follow-up interpellation about the influence of EADS on said personnel and the training of Saudi Arabian troops on German firearms. The latter question was formulated explicitly in regard to the deployment of Saudi Arabian police forces to curb the MENA uprisings in neighbouring Bahrain (see section 5.3), an issue of continued importance (DS 17/6745, DS 17/6863).

Worthy to note here is the fact that said interpellations do not originate equally from all opposition parties of the German parliament. Apart from the two interpellations by B90G discussed above, all interpellations were raised by the Left, headed by changing constellations of parliamentarians.¹² Thus far, the Left seemed most

¹¹The control of exports by arms manufacturer H&K was the sole subject of an interpellation by the Left in June. See interpellation DS 17/6214 and answer DS 17/6432.

¹²Other interpellations before July 2011 related to arms exports concerned the transport of arms via Germany, the export of certain engines and the significance of dual-use goods in general and the support of the "authoritarian regime in Morocco".

willing to exact criticism on arms exports, especially into arguably controversial destinations. More than the B90G and even more than the SPD it seemed prone to attack the federal government over its policy C.

In the parliament's plenary session, the debate about German arms exports also began in early February. Referencing simultaneous events in Egypt, the Left called for the end of all arms exports to all countries of the Near and Middle East. After passage of an arms embargo to Egypt, the party additionally inquired about Algeria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia (PP 17/89, 9969). Explicitly referencing Saudi Arabia's military intervention in Bahrain already mentioned, the party's MdBs demanded an immediate end to all arms exports to the country. Additionally, they pointed out that some of the arms used in Bahrain were German products (PP 17/95, 10823). The Left elaborated on its criticism in March, blaming the government for always only stopping arms exports to countries that had clearly started to experience severe unrest:

“Als es im Januar dieses Jahres um Tunesien ging, hat die Bundesregierung irgendwann entschieden, keine Waffen mehr an Tunesien zu liefern. Wir haben Sie damals gefragt: Warum gilt das nicht auch für Ägypten, warum nicht auch für Saudi-Arabien? Aber Sie haben Ihre Entscheidung auf Tunesien beschränkt. Ein paar Wochen später haben sie die Waffenexporte nach Ägypten beschränkt. Da haben wir gesagt: Richtig so! Aber warum gilt das nicht auch für Saudi-Arabien, warum nicht auch für Libyen? Ein paar Wochen später haben Sie die Waffenlieferungen nach Libyen gestoppt. Ich sage Ihnen heute ein für alle Mal: Stoppen Sie alle Waffenexporte in den Nahen und Mittleren Osten, an alle Diktatoren dort!”¹³

MdB JAN VAN AKEN¹⁴, on the 18th of March 2011

SIPRI noted Germany's suspension of arms export admissions to Bahrain, Libya and Tunisia. In this context its researchers pointed out the impossibility to suspend or revoke admissions that had already been granted due to German law. They cited an anonymous German official stating that the German government asked manufacturers to withhold already admitted exports until further notice (Bromley et al. 2012, 278-279). Obviously such an improvised approach was completely dependent on the judgment of for-profit companies. In its Yearbook 2012, SIPRI saw overall little evidence indicating a considerable impact of human rights abuses during the MENA uprisings on the export activities of arms-supplying countries. This applied to Russia, the USA as well as EU member states (Bromley et al., 279).

On the 24th of March the German Bundestag had to take a decision on two petitions: First, the SPD petitioned for more transparency and participation of the parliament in decisions on arms exports (DS 17/5054). In addition, SPD's MdB *Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul* asked for restraint in the future. Furthermore, she stated

See interpellations DS 17/4706, 17/4996, 17/5888 and 17/5275 and answers 17/4909, 17/5272, 17/6147 and 17/5556. *Dual-use* describes the status of a good that can be used both militarily and non-militarily. Such goods are a constant matter of controversy due to the very different rules that apply, depending on which use is considered in an export decision.

¹³The quotation in my own translation: “When Tunisia was the issue in January this year, the federal government decided eventually, to stop shipping arms to Tunisia. We asked back then: why does this not apply to Egypt, why not also to Saudi Arabia? But you limited your decision to Tunisia. A few weeks later you imposed limits on arms exports to Egypt. We said: rightly so! But why does this not also apply to Saudi Arabia, why not also to Libya? A few weeks later you stopped arms exports to Libya. I tell you today once and for all: stop all arms exports to the Near and Middle East, to all dictators there!”; see PP 17/97, 11146.

¹⁴MdB *Jan van Aken* is a former UN biological weapons inspector and arguably the Left's most vocal MdB on the issue.

that arms exports into countries not dedicated to democracy should be made impossible altogether. CDU/CSU countered that the SPD's petition brought no new arguments and that it had been in debate since a long time. According to them, no government had ever substantially questioned established practices. They furthermore emphasised the importance of a separation of the executive and legislative branches (PP 17/99, 11380-82). In this assessment the sister parties were supported by the FDP. The latter furthermore elaborated on the fact that MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul* had been a Federal Minister in three different governments and hence a member of the BSR from 1998 to 2009, citing numbers from these years.¹⁵ This conflict exemplifies the dilemma of former government parties to have been part of similarly questionable export decisions in the past. It considerably weakens their position in attacking the current government about policy *C* and, referring back to section 3.2, makes them susceptible to retaliation $-d_2$ (see section 3.2). Demonstrating this, the CSU pointed to the former SPD/B90G government which had rejected a very similar petition by the PDS, the Left's predecessor. Despite also wishing for more timely reporting by the government, the party expressed confidence that the *PolG* and other criteria were upheld by the government.

In the second petition, B90G asked to completely reject export permissions to manufacturers which had proven themselves to be unreliable (DS 17/5204).¹⁶ The party furthermore proposed the integration of national and EU-level guidelines into the AWG to provide for legal bindingness. It criticised the lack of parliamentary as well as judicial control of the government (PP 17/99, 11385). The confidence of government MdBs in the current system was just documented above.

The Left once more appeared to be most critical in its assessment of *C*, instead championing a restrictive arms export policy *D*. It attacked the practice of post-export control as insufficient, the human rights criterion as non-binding and thus ineffective and the whole process as generally intransparent. The party explicitly cited the federal government's human rights report and its views on Saudi Arabia. In the report the government cites capital punishment, political imprisonment and forced confessions among the Saudi Arabian society's deficiencies. Freedom of expression is limited and freedom of religion non-existent. In line with its self-image as a strictly Islamic, non-secular state based on tribal traditions, religion and shariah in Wahhabite interpretation, its ratifications of several UN conventions only hold under certain constraints with regard to the shariah. Apart from that, the report criticises the situation of women who are deprived of essential human rights and the common practice of forced marriage of underage girls. Despite this, the report sees a gradual but very slow opening of the ruling monarchy towards human rights matters. A public human rights commission exists since 2005, representing the country in human rights matters internationally and working on human rights policy harmonisation internally. Furthermore, the EU initiated a human rights dialogue in 2009 which is used as an indicator of the country's opening to the matter in the plenary debates (AA 2012, 281). Nevertheless, the Left demanded that a country which had been met with such an assessment as Saudi Arabia must not even be considered for arms exports anymore (PP 17/99, 11382-83). Both petitions were subsequently transferred to

¹⁵Presenting MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul*'s defence here would distract from the issue at hand. See PP 17/99, 11383-85 for details

¹⁶The focus of this interpellation was once more small arms manufacturer H&K. Refer back to interpellation DS 17/5599.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
State Legitimacy	9.8	8.5	8.8	8.8	8.4	8.2	7.9	7.6	7.8	8.1
Human Rights and Rule of Law	8.6	8.5	8.8	9.1	8.9	9.1	8.9	8.6	8.9	8.8
Security Apparatus	9.0	7.8	7.3	7.3	8.0	7.8	7.5	7.2	7.2	6.9
Rank ¹⁷	45	73	83	84	89	87	93	100	102	96

Table 6.1: Selected scores of Saudi Arabia in the Fragile States Index, 2005 to 2014

This table presents the selected scores of Saudi Arabia in the *Fragile States Index* by the Washington, D.C.-based think tank *Fund for Peace* (FFP). The three categories Human Rights and Rule of Law as well as State Legitimacy and Security Apparatus are given here out of twelve overall categories. Each category can yield 0 to 10 points. Low scores and high ranks indicate low fragility.

Computing the average of certain years for the category *Human Rights and the Rule of Law* brings the following results: for the years 2005-08 the average score is 8.75, for the years 2008-11 it is 9.0 and for 2011-14 it is 8.8. Similarly, to take the human rights dialogue between the EU and Saudi Arabia more into consideration other average scores can be computed. For the years 2005-09 the score is 8.78 and for the years 2010-14 it is 8.86. While this is obviously not an exhaustive or sufficient assessment of the EU's efforts to strengthen the respect for human rights in Saudi Arabia, it does indicate the difficulty and tediousness of the process. The latter two averages even suggest a regression of the process.

For details on the the categories as well as the full *Fragile States Index* see FFP 2014.

the parliamentary committee preferred by the government parties's majority, the Committee for Economy and Technology. For indicators of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia see table 6.1.

After the debates of February and March, German arms exports were not a priority of the Bundestag. An interesting example is the agenda item entitled *Germany in the UNSC – impulses for peace and disarmament* on the 8th of April. Minister *Westerwelle* stated that Germany worked for a robust ATT on UN level. The aim was to ensure that regimes which violate human rights and countries in civil war could not be legally supplied with arms anymore (PP 17/103, 11807). The remainder of the debate, however, clearly focused on disarmament concerning WMDs. This is line with conclusions drawn above from the WB regarding the primary focus of Germany's disarmament efforts.

It took another two months, until the 9th of June, until the topic was on the parliamentary agenda again. The Left had introduced a barrage of petitions into the Bundestag, each asking for an end to all exports to another single country of the MENA region. These petitions concerned Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, Oman, Yemen, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Morocco, Lebanon, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar and Algeria (DS 17/5935 – 17/5950). The Left picked up on its criticism from March and maintained the impression of being the party in parliament most critical of arms exports. It demanded an end to exports and any support in armament matters to Saudi Arabia, again taking arguments from the government's human rights report. The party explained the series of 16 different petitions with its wish to give MdBs of other parties the opportunity to reflect and decide on every single case. (PP 17/114, 13044-45). Parliamentarians of both governing parties CDU/CSU and FDP rejected the Left's petitions as undifferentiated and as propagandist examples of clientele

¹⁷The overall number of surveyed countries was 76 in 2005, 146 in 2006, 177 from 2007 to 2012 and 178 since.

politics. The FDP maintained that a middle-sized power like Germany self-evidently needed a security and defence industry. The party furthermore held that such an industry could indeed export security, for example to Saudi Arabia. It wished to move the debate away from small arms and instead wished to focus on the export of high-tech arms products. According to the FDP, uncontrolled export of these could indeed negatively impact on Germany's security. The party argued that the restrictive handling of these by the government occurred in awareness of Germany's status as an important exporter of goods. The FDP wished to retain this status of the country (PP 17/114, 13045, 13047-48). MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul* (SPD) was still occupied with defending herself and her party's actions in government against criticism mainly from the FDP while leveling own criticism (PP 17/114, 13046-47). B90G voiced support for the SPD's criticism, also pointing to the government's human rights report. Interestingly, they attacked the Left, saying that their unrealistic demands were based in the fact that it did not wish to gain governmental responsibility anyway (PP 17/114, 13050-51). This notion in a way reflects the considerations in section 3.4.

In accordance with the Committee's recommendations, the March 2011 petitions by SPD and B90G described above were rejected. The Left abstained. Furthermore, parliament decided on two older petitions of the Left. One called, among other tenets, for an end to arms exports to the Near East and an end of military cooperation (DS 17/2481). The other called for an end to all arms exports (DS 17/5039), representing policy *D* ever more clearly. These were rejected with the votes of all other parties. One reason SPD and B90G opted for rejection as well is the fact that such a petition also included an end of arms exports to Israel. The 16 single-country petitions were forwarded to the Committee of Economy and Technology (PP 17/114, 13053). It becomes rather apparent here that the Left indeed filed petitions with overlapping contents. Thus, the accusation of symbol politics as raised by the governmental coalition does not seem fully unsubstantiated.

In June 2011 the opposition had been critically accompanying the federal government's conduct related to the MENA uprisings since half a year. Although sometimes in agreement in their criticism, the three opposition parties SPD, B90G and the Left often enough were divided, with the latter party fending alone. SPD and B90G were, through own arms exports and military deployments during own years in government, more vulnerable to counterattacks by the governing parties. MdBs of the governing parties CDU/CSU and FDP did use these weaknesses, showing that there was not only something to gain ($+a_2$) but equally something to lose ($-d_2$) for them. Nevertheless, SPD and B90G criticised the government's policy *C* continuously. The Left did not have this problem of a past in office, thus being less vulnerable to $-d_2$. Yet it kept alienating the other opposition parties by means of seemingly unrealistic demands, hence forfeiting the chance to achieve anything with its petitions. The government rejected them as clientele-driven.

Thus was the situation on arms exports in German federal politics in the end of June 2011.

6.3 July 2011: 200 Leopard II MBTs

Early July of 2011 saw reports surfacing about an alleged upcoming arms deal between Saudi Arabia and Germany. This deal was said to encompass 200 *Leopard II* main battle tanks (MBTs), in its up-to-date version A7+ in question one of the world's most advanced weapon systems of its kind. In light of the year's events and preceding debates in parliament, dispute was guaranteed.

MdBs of opposition parties directed five so-called *urgent questions* (Dringliche Fragen) at the federal government. The first three of these were posed by parliamentarians of the B90G, the latter two by the Left. Requested by B90G, the regular plenary session was followed by a *question time* (Fragestunde) on the topic. The latter is interesting in that many major politicians of opposition parties participated in it, some of which went on to play prominent roles in the federal elections of 2013. The plenary session appears also noticeably more emotional and polemic than the already sometimes heated debates earlier in 2011. To some extent, the five *urgent questions* resemble each other. They touched on topics such as the alleged deal's justification, realisation, foreign and security policy reasons, compatibility with declared support for the MENA uprisings and the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. Evidently, the questions seemed to have had a common purpose. This purpose was to either make parliamentarians of the governing coalition confirm the recent media reports or acknowledge the harm done if such a trade, a prime example of *C*, was realised. Necessarily, this renders the debate somewhat repetitive. Nevertheless, instructive details can be drawn from the plenary protocol of the 6th of July 2011.

Parliamentary State Secretary and MdB *Hans-Joachim Otto* (FDP) was present to answer the parliament's first three urgent questions.¹⁸ B90G inquired about the government's justification for the purported arms deal. In his reply and in unison with earlier statement from the governmental coalition, MdB *Otto* stressed that the government would make every decision on a single-case basis and in agreement with the *PolG* and the *EU CP 2008/944/CFSP*. In the situation of very controversial cases, the decision would be taken by the BSR.¹⁹ Since the council's proceedings are bound by secrecy, he must not comment on any media reports related to them. As he stressed, this has never been different and was handled in the same way by any preceding federal government, clearly hinting to SPD and B90G. With regard to Saudi Arabia he highlighted the country's importance as a partner in the international fight against terrorism. He furthermore emphasised the efforts by both the federal government and the EU to address the country's human rights issues (PP 17/119, 13797-98). MdB *Otto* continued that a case involving many different interests regarding security and other factors demanded weighting. This case for instance included, amongst other themes, human rights and a country's relations to neighboring countries. Early on in the debate, MdB *Otto* stated the following fact which went on to be increasingly ignored by all participants in the debate:

¹⁸In Germany, the term *Parliamentary State Secretary* describes a position held by an MdB who assists a Federal Minister in her or his duties. It is thus a hybrid office between the legislative and executive branches.

¹⁹The BSR was discussed in section 5.2.

*“Sie sprechen immer von einer ‘Entscheidung’. Ich kann nur sagen: Es geht um eine angebliche Entscheidung. Ich kann weder bestätigen noch dementieren, dass es überhaupt eine Entscheidung gegeben hat.”*²⁰

MdB HANS-JOACHIM OTTO, on the 6th of July 2011

This fact went on to be largely ignored because the opposition’s MdBs attempted to label both arms deals with Saudi Arabia and the consideration of such deals as wrong. B90G used a quote from the *PolG* regarding the denial of exports into countries involved in armed conflicts and into regions in crisis.²¹ The Left inquired in an openly tendentious manner whether MdB *Otto* could confirm that the label *democracy* did not fit to Saudi Arabia and that the country did not exactly play a peaceful role in the Arab-Israeli conflict. In a similar vein, the Left questioned whether the shipment of arms to Saudi Arabia would constitute a contribution to the realisation of human rights and whether it was an expression of the *western community of values* proclaimed by Minister *Westerwelle*. The State Secretary’s answer expressed optimism that Saudi Arabia could be influenced in a desirable manner. He also stated that the human rights dialogue would obviously not exist if it was not deemed necessary and promising (PP 17/119, 13799-801).

B90G and SPD referenced the events in Bahrain and the role Saudi Arabia played in it. MdB *Otto* routinely pointed to the necessary weighting of the larger context beyond recent tensions, calling Saudi Arabia a *regional protecting power* and *regional major power regarding Iran*.²² Equally routinely, he emphasised the notion that the situation in Saudi Arabia was not a new one, and that the federal government of SPD and B90G had equally shipped arms to the kingdom. This clearly demonstrated that the now critical opposition had once pursued policy *C*. He attributed this to an obvious process of weighting their government had done back then. Similar questions and similar answers followed, accompanied by the opposition’s disapproval that no member of Chancellor *Merkel’s* cabinet was present in the plenary session (PP 17/119, 13799-804). MdB *Otto* replied that not even the Chancellor had the authority to share information from the BSR and again pointed to past Chancellors who had also never done such a thing. Again, one may see this as a subtle reminder to SPD and B90G that they had favoured *C* while being in office. He also rejected more questions about preliminary enquiries from Saudi Arabia as the country’s rulers had tried to buy German tanks for many years. In order to inform parliament and public, the government commissioned the *REB*, again a practice handled in the same way by preceding governments. Thus he firmly rejected any comments suggesting corruption or influence of an *arms lobby* as triggers of the deal. Such accusations had been raised by MdB *Hans-Christian Ströbele* (B90G). MdB *Otto* maintained that the primary goods in consideration were – as in the past – security and alliance interests (PP 17/119, 13806-09).

The first support for MdB *Otto* in his questioning came through State Minister *Eckart von Klaeden* (CDU).

²⁰The quotation in my own translation: “You keep talking about a ‘decision’. I can only say: this is about an alleged decision. I can neither confirm nor discount that there has been a decision at all.”; PP 17/119, 13799.

²¹Like the BSR, the *PolG* were discussed in section 5.2.

²²The notion of supporting Saudi Arabia against Iran was a recurring one in parliament but is of even greater importance in media coverage. This will show in section 6.6.

He confirmed that neither the BSR's proceedings or media reports concerning them would be commented on. MdB *von Klaeden* emphasised that there could only be agreement about the unfavourable human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. However, with the intention of preventing an imbalanced picture, he emphasised several points: in 2002 Saudi Arabia had started a peace initiative for the Arab-Israeli conflict that aims for a two-state-solution. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia supported the international fight against terrorism. Information provided by the country had even prevented terrorist attacks in Germany. An ordered transition of power in Yemen would have been equally impossible as would have been the liberation of German hostages in the same country. He called Saudi Arabia an *important strategic partner* (PP 17/119, 13804). This triggered new questions into the extent of Saudi Arabian support of the fight against terrorism. With clear intent, the SPD asked about alleged support of terrorist groups by members of the house of Saud. In a similar way, the Left referenced the labeling of Saudi Arabia as a *protective power* by asking whether the intervention in Bahrain needs to be seen as a corresponding protective measure (PP 17/119, 13805-06).

An MdB of the FDP asked for information about how the BSR proceeds to avoid any more of the speculation by the opposition. He possibly aimed at supporting his fellow governmental coalition MdBs. In his answer, MdB *von Klaeden* reemphasised the secrecy of the BSR's proceedings and pointed to the *REB* for information. Besides, according to him, the guidelines are *self-evidently binding*. MdB *Otto* had merely called the guidelines a *self-commitment*, albeit one that is upheld. The difference between the remarks was pointed out by the opposition (PP 17/119, 13809-11).

State Minister in the Federal Foreign Office, MdB *Cornelia Pieper* (FDP), replied to urgent questions numbers 4 and 5. Hardly surprising is that she used the same argumentation as her colleagues MdBs *Otto* and *von Klaeden*: she identified human rights as a non-negotiable good for the federal government which pursued a value-oriented foreign policy. At the same time stability and security in the region were vital, in the maintenance of which Saudi Arabia played an important role. Furthermore, she did not share any information regarding the BSR while occasionally highlighting the arms exports to Saudi Arabia permitted by the earlier SPD/B90G government (BT 17119, 13814-17). This pattern succeeds in summing up the approach on the issue by the parliamentary groups of the governmental coalition. As opposed to it, the Left saw all credibility of the German government at risk if the deal was not halted (PP 17/121, 14304).

The public found entry into the debate in passing: The Left cited the apparent influence of arms industry lobbyism as a concern in wide shares of the population. The party furthermore pointed to a demonstration that was announced to take place next to the parliament building on the same day (PP 17/119, 13809). B90G rhetorically asked what kind of message the governing coalition would convey to the teenagers listening in the audience with its policy of not providing information. The Left similarly asked, whether it would be a good move against political apathy to compare the German Bundestag with a market square. MdB *Otto* had used the symbol of a market as a venue inappropriate to decide on matters of high politics, as opposed to the BSR. In his equally rhetorical answer, MdB *Otto* then inquired whether it would be any more useful for the audience to hear the same question 20, 50 or 80 times, always triggering the same answer (PP 17/119, 13812-13813).

Important to note, however, is the fact that representatives of the federal government never became proactive in including the public in their argumentation. This only makes sense since the government, as I pointed out in section 3.1.1, may be, and in this case is, very aware of *C*'s unpopularity.

The shorter follow-up discussion in the Bundestag's plenary session on the 8th of July did not change the parties' basic positions. Nor were instructive new arguments brought forward. Three petitions were up for debate and decision, one tabled by each opposition party. The Left called for a ban on supplying tanks to Saudi Arabia. The SPD demanded not to supply armaments to areas of tensions and the observance of a restrictive arms export policy. B90G asked not to supply weapons of war to Saudi Arabia. While B90G supported the Left's petition, the SPD was very divided, with that parliamentary group's majority abstaining. Both the SPD's and B90G's petitions were supported by the entire opposition, with only minimal abstentions. With its majority of votes, the governmental coalition rejected all three petitions (PP 17/121, 14326-32). This shows once more the opposition parties' divide.

The *question time* following the usual plenary session on the 6th of July is more insightful in depicting the parties' actual positions. It is less confrontative in that the MdBs give their speeches without replying much to preceding speeches. Some of the speakers for the opposition parties in this instance are prominent members of their respective parties.

The SPD was represented by party chairman MdB *Sigmar Gabriel*, among others. The party pointed less to the fact that the federal government did export arms, knowing that his own party had exported such goods when it was in government. He instead focused on the fact that the federal government seemed to violate the *PolG* devised by the government of which his party had been a part. Even more prominently, he blamed the government for lacking the courage to advocate its policy to the public. He demanded that the government explain its foreign policy, especially when modifying it by exporting Leopard II MBTs to Saudi Arabia after preceding governments had declined to do so for 30 years. In connection with the arms exports he called the dramatic verbal support for the MENA uprisings *shameful*. The chairman speculated that the government was trying to repair the damage dealt to its international reputation among its Western allies through its abstention in the UNSC vote on Libya. In doing so, he saw the end of a sovereign German foreign policy as it merely tried to be taken seriously again by the USA. The SPD demanded a debate about the question whether Germany's foreign policy was still value-guided or rather business-guided. According to the party, the government chose the worst moment possible for such a deal, sending a disastrous signal to the MENA region's protesters. Once the old regimes would be overcome, those people would very well remember which countries had supplied the weapons with which they had been suppressed. The party emphasised the region's need for cooperation, diplomacy and good will, instead of more arms. The SPD dismissed the argument of Saudi Arabia as a counterweight to Iran and demanded to revoke the decision (PP 17/119, 13827-28, 13834-35).

B90G was represented by MdB *Jürgen Trittin*, one of two top candidates in the 2013 federal elections. MdB *Trittin* saw the federal government side by side with despotism. Acknowledging the problematic nature of arms exports, he did also mention the SPD/B90G government. He pointed out contradictions with Chancellor

Merkel's speech in Munich in February in which the Chancellor had sided with the protesters. MdB *Trittin* equally dismissed the argument regarding Iran, pointing instead to a possible beginning of a new arms race in the region. Thus he saw both values and interests compromised and demanded the deal's revocation. Furthermore, B90G called the deal a breach of law in that exports of *weapons of war* into third states were forbidden unless Germany's security interests demanded them. If internal repression and human rights violations occurred in the country of destination, such exports were strictly forbidden, according to the party's argumentation. B90G emphasised the role of the *alleged disarmament party* FDP in the deal. Although it was the minor coalition party, it had four Ministers in the BSR, the same amount as CDU/CSU. In line with both other opposition parties, B90G accused the government of hiding behind the BSR's secrecy and evading any public criticism, no matter how valid (PP 17/119, 13822-23, 13830-31).

The Left was represented by its parliamentary group leader MdB *Gregor Gysi* and MdB *van Aken*. Other than SPD and B90G, the Left did not need to justify past arms deals and so labeled all exports to Saudi Arabia, past and present, a mistake. They acknowledged the temporary end to arms exports to the region but called their apparent recommencement outrageous, stating that the German population did not deserve this. Similar to SPD and B90G, they condemned the government's reluctance to communicate its decision to the population and hiding behind secrecy. They noted that public outcry had to be expected under such circumstances. The Left equally condemned the SPD/B90G government's exports in the early 2000s. It ended on a somewhat positive note, in that this deal now finally convinced these two parties that more parliamentary participation was necessary. The MdBs pointed especially to the government's own assessment of the human rights situation in Saudi Arabia. They criticised Minister *Westerwelle* by comparing very recent statements in support of the MENA uprisings with the purported arms trade. As for the current deal's reasons, it suspected influencing by arms lobbyists in the CDU/CSU's and FDP's parliamentary groups (PP 17/119, 13824-25, 13832-34).

It becomes well visible here that all opposition parties stage criticism against the federal government. They condemned arms exports to the MENA region as counterproductive to peace and disarmament and in addition as detrimental to the validity of Germany's foreign policy. Furthermore, they criticised the government's approach to hide behind the BSR's secrecy, refusing to publicly defend its policy *C*. SPD and B90G had to invest some effort into defending own past arms exports, an issue the Left did not have to deal with. Despite these differences, all opposition parties clearly demand a radical reduction of arms exports, thus championing *D*.

6.4 Identifying *g*

The FDP emphasised the distinction between executive and legislative action in a polity. It defended the members of the BSR as none of them would have taken any decision lightly. Accusing the opposition of hypocrisy, the MdBs cited statistics about past government's exports. The FDP again described how the earlier SPD/B90G government had rejected a demand by the PDS to modify the BSR's *modus operandi*. The party asked for more trust in the government taking proper care of its responsibility, just like the SPD/B90G government had

assumingly done years earlier. In line with earlier argumentations, the FDP furthermore identified Iran as the greatest threat to Israel. It emphasised Israel's obvious support without which a positive export decision could never be taken. However, the party accepted that one may come to a different conclusion about the arms deal than the government. Fitting such statements, the FDP ended its argumentation on a rather conciliatory note. Now that information about the arms deal had reached the public, it would be inappropriate for the government to merely hide behind secrecy. Both the German Bundestag and the German public had the right and the duty to have this debate. Accordingly, the federal government shall find a way to enable public debate while maintaining current regulations. MdB *Rainer Stinner* earned applause for this demand, while not from all parliamentarians, from members of all parliamentary groups (PP 17/119, 13825-27, 13832-33).

The CDU/CSU defended Saudi Arabia as an important partner in the region and a stabilising factor towards Iran and the Arab-Israeli conflict, despite its societal flaws and human rights issues. Weighted decision-making was thus necessary. Its MdBs appealed to a rational and realistic attitude towards the topic, calling it one of *classic governance*, and shrugged off accusations of secrecy. Moreover, they accused the former SPD/B90G government of some degree of *hypocrisy* given their own exports to the country. Exports were guided by foreign policy and security interests, and thus none of the guidelines had been breached just like they had not been breached by preceding governments. The CDU/CSU condemned the opposition's criticism as a *howling of indignation*, a *moral club* and the *enactment of a play*. Regarding the criticism of a decision guided by considerations of employment, the party stressed that according to the *PolG* considerations of employment must not play a *critical role*. By implication, however, they may play some role. If they had really wanted such considerations to play no role at all, SPD and B90G could have formulated it in such a manner. According to CDU/CSU, Germany's guidelines were among the most restrictive in the world and were handled properly. Another argument was the German Bundeswehr's general independence of arms imports. This self-sufficiency could only be maintained with a competitive arms industry, strengthened through successful trades abroad. Interestingly, the sister parties pointed to the SPD's difficulties with SPD-affiliated IG Metall, an important union keen on maintaining the arms industry's competitiveness (PP 17/119, 13823-24, 13828-29, 13835-38).

The governmental parties accepted criticism of the government's approach of secrecy to some extent. However, CDU/CSU and FDP expressed trust in the government's decision-making and emphasised the allegedly positive role of Saudi Arabia in the region. They did so in light of Iran's regional aspirations. This argument suggests that some aspect of *g* consists in stability in the region and thus security for Germany and its allies. Additionally, they defended the arms trade with regard to the German arms industry's competitiveness. Hence, part of the government's gain *g* consists in the strengthening of Germany's arms industry. German governments generally express pride in the country's strong export-based economy and CDU/CSU and FDP have the reputation of being the most business-friendly parties. However, because the German economy does so greatly rely on exports, arms exports do not constitute an essential share of it. The share of exports of *weapons of war* in overall German exports in the years 2012 and 2013 is given as 0.09% for each year (BMW 2013, 32). This share is larger when including *other armaments* but not essentially so. Possibly of more importance is the number

of jobs in the arms industry. Depending on the source, greatly differing numbers can be found.²³ Whatever the truth is, undoubtedly no political party will want to be made responsible for the loss of jobs. Thus tending to an industry so that it can maintain the level of employment forms part of g for any political party, in this case. Nevertheless, the case study has indicated that economic reasons tend to be viewed more critically by the trade's opponents. In this case, the argument is continued from the domestic arms industry's interests to the material self-sufficiency of the Bundeswehr resulting from said industry. In this way, the argument leads back to security concerns. In summary, the MdBs of CDU/CSU and FDP indirectly championed C by bringing in arguments in the government's place for a deal that remained, after all, hypothetical.

Yet the significance of possible monetary payoffs needs to be addressed, not only because of MdB *Ströbele's* accusations of bribery. MdB *van Aken* had singled out the head of the CDU parliamentary group, MdB *Volker Kauder*. He claimed that arms manufacturers H&K and Rheinmetall were both situated in the MdB's constituency. While this is true for H&K, Rheinmetall does not have its most central facilities in that constituency. However, through many subsidiaries it may possess stakes in it. The incentive for the influential MdB to support the companies, however, does seem obvious. Referring back to the above paragraph, weakening the arms industry in his constituency could link him to the loss of jobs, a fact that respective companies could easily point out. In fact, MdB *van Aken* cited a statement of support for exporting efforts of companies in his constituency from MdB *Kauder's* website. Besides, MdB *van Aken* showed little surprise at the MdB's absence in that day's debate (PP 17/119, 13833).

Regarding the recurring argument of supporting exporting efforts by German arms manufacturers, the following needs to be stated. The reasoning to use arms exports to strengthen the domestic arms industry, maintain know-how and secure employment is not undisputed. Researcher DIENSTBIER of the Berlin-based *Global Public Policy Institute* recently published an article in *Zeit* arguing that the focus on arms exports in the EU was actually counterproductive in the long run. Due to budget cuts of domestic militaries in industrial states, European arms manufacturers cannot sell their arms domestically anymore or. As they all try to sell their respective products abroad to regions where budgets have not declined, such as the MENA region, supply exceeds demand. Since this scenario favors the customer, arms manufacturers often have to sell their products under disadvantageous conditions. This development is exacerbated by trades including technology transfer which might turn the customers of today into the competition of tomorrow. Like researcher JACKSON of SIPRI (see section 5.2), DIENSTBIER regards the thorough integration of European arms industries as absolutely vital (Zeit 2014d).

In regard to party donations from arms manufacturers the following can be found. According to German party law, single party donations of more than €50,000 have to be disclosed to the President of the Bundestag who then announces them in the plenary assembly. While there is no upper limit to party donations, even

²³The *Bundesverband der Deutschen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsindustrie e.V.* (BDSV), the arms industry's main lobby organisation in Germany, cites 100,000 employees in the German arms industry as such and another 120,000 in ancillary industries in 2011. On the contrary, the financial newspaper *Handelsblatt* cites 80,000 while *Süddeutsche Zeitung* gives a figure of "only around 200,000". Clearly, not many political decision-makers keen on reelection would subscribe to the latter assessment. See BDSV 2013, 11 as well as HB 28.12.2011 and SZ 2014a.

		Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG	Rheinmetall AG	EADS Deutschland GmbH
2011	CDU	–	€16,000	€20,000
	CSU	€17,000	–	–
	SPD	–	€12,000	€30,000
2012	CDU	€17,500	€17,000	€20,000
	CSU	€15,000	–	€20,000
	SPD	–	–	€30,000

Table 6.2: Party donations by selected arms manufacturers in 2011 and 2012

This table illustrates the withdrawal of funds by arms manufacturers KMW and Rheinmetall from the SPD. It seems questionable though whether the raise in funds given to the CDU by KMW can serve as the only explanation for the government's allegedly benevolent decision-making in 2011. Donations by multinational corporation EADS (restructured as Airbus Group in 2013) which has an arms-manufacturing branch are given as a comparative value. Other political parties did not receive donations from either of these companies (DS 18/400).

donations by large industrial companies usually do not exceed €500,000 per single donation.²⁴ The great deal of publicity that such publicly declared donations can be met with was last exemplified in 2013. Less than a month after the federal elections of 2013, donations of a combined €690,000 by three major BMW shareholders to the CDU sparked critical reactions in the media and the opposition (Spiegel 2013d, DB 2013).²⁵ Donations ranging between €10,000 and €50,000 merely have to be declared in a party's annual statement of accounts (PartG). Such donations clearly entail less publicity and enables donors to remain out of the spotlight more easily. Arguably, this is what arms manufacturers may be inclined to do, knowing that their businesses are, by tendency, seen critically in the majority of the public. The latest statements of accounts by political parties concern the year 2012. Some movements in donations from the two companies mainly producing the Leopard II MBT, KMW and Rheinmetall, between 2011 and 2012 are visible, see table 6.2.

In 2011, the CDU received €16,000 in party donations from Rheinmetall and the CSU €17,000 from KMW. The SPD also received €12,000 from Rheinmetall (DS 17/12340). These distinctions make sense in that Rheinmetall is based in Düsseldorf, the capital city of Northrhine-Westphalia where both CDU and SPD compete for government. KMW on the opposite is based in Munich, the capital city of Bavaria, where since the inception of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949 no other party than the CSU has ever led a government. Rather clearly, the location of a company seems to steer party donations. In 2012, the CDU received €17,000 from Rheinmetall and €17,500 from KMW while the CSU received €15,000 from KMW. The additional donation by KMW to the CDU, in a way represents a donation to the federal level as the CDU never competes in Bavaria. The SPD received no donations from these two companies in 2012 (DS 18/400).²⁶ While it might seem reason-

²⁴From 2009 until today only one donation exceeded €1,000,000 and two more exceeded €500,000. See DB 2014.

²⁵The three shareholders *Susanne Klatten*, *Johanna Quandt* and *Stefan Quandt* donated €230,000 each. Critical reactions were triggered by the fact that the federal German government had just successfully opposed tighter exhaust emission standards at EU level. Said opposition was allegedly in the shareholders' interest since such standards would have primarily impacted top-of-the-range cars as BMW produces them. *Spiegel* cited the anti-lobbyism NGO *LobbyControl* with the suspicion that the shareholders might have deliberately withheld their donations until after the federal elections. See Spiegel 2013d.

²⁶Other political parties represented in parliament received no donations from these companies neither in 2011 nor 2012.

able to attribute these changes to the SPD's criticism of the MBT deal during the July 2011 debates, these sums seem rather insufficient to be the government's main incentive for pursuing *C*. One might ask why companies do not give sums closer to the publicity threshold of €50,000. Possibly companies are confident to be treated benevolently even when donating smaller sums and distinctly prioritise to keep a low profile among many other donors. What is more is that industry associations are often among the largest donors to political parties.²⁷ It is conceivable that arms manufacturers deem themselves well represented by respective associations and their donations. With regard to party donations in 2011, the location of a company might have a greater impact on donations by default than any party affiliations. As the company EADS in table 6.2 exemplifies, companies with sufficient funds may have the incentive to donate to any party with realistic chances of achieving governmental responsibility.

While seemingly not the only incentive, donations surely add up to the perceived increases in the domestic arms industry's competitiveness and in security that the government enables with its policy *C*. Thus *g* consists in a sum of gains in security and stability, strengthening of Germany's export-oriented economy in general and arms industry in particular as well as certain lobby payoffs.

6.5 August to December 2011

After the initial public outcry and media coverage of early July had died down, the topic of German arms exports into the MENA region lost prominence. In harmony with this trend, the particular issue of 200 MBTs for Saudi Arabia equally lost importance. Only a few parliamentarians touched on the topic in passing but only as far as the actual topics in discussion were concerned. One may debate whether it was the silly season or the calming of the MENA uprisings that supported this development. The former coincides with the recess of parliament in Germany. As for the latter, the MENA uprisings, one can find that except for Libya, Egypt and Syria the uprisings in all countries had somewhat consolidated. Said consolidation went to the extent that they were not as extensively covered in Western media anymore. Another fact remains: almost all longstanding autocrats that had been in power as of December 2010 but that are out of power now had left office by early autumn 2011. Two exceptions to this can be found. Yemeni President *Saleh* was still officially in office, his resignation though was already only a matter of time. Libyan leader *al-Gaddafi* was, by coincidence, killed on the very same day that the German parliament discussed arms exports in detail once more, the 20th of October.

The occasion was the voting on several petitions, among them the Left's 16 arms export bans on individual countries discussed before in section 6.2. Even with more than three months in between, the arguments brought forward by the parliamentarians were hardly new. By tendency, MdBs of CDU/CSU and FDP were rather in unison in their speeches, once again defending the government's apparent pursuit of *C*. They supported foreign and security policy interests as necessarily being the most important criterion. To this end, the capacities of the

²⁷While these associations do not provide lists of their single member companies, it seems possible that arms manufacturers are for example organised in metal-working associations. See DB 2014 for details, the number of donations from metal-working industry associations in the year 2013 is particularly instructive.

German arms industry should also be maintained. On a single-case basis, compromises between concerns had to be struck, among them considerations of security and human rights. They also noted that German shares of arms exports to third countries were anyway far smaller than often depicted.

Hence they still judged the opposition's indignation to be staged for political effect. Yet populism and emotion would not be helpful in a world of which weapons are inevitably a part, thus dismissing the idea of permanent bans on any arms exports. At the same time CDU/CSU and FDP kept pointing out past neglect of the SPD/B90G government on the one hand. While that former government had made human rights an essential criterion, it had yet failed to make it the decisive one. On the other hand, the government parties maintained trust in that said SPD/B90G government made export decisions with due responsibility. They once more emphasised the necessary distinction of the executive and legislative powers (PP 17/133, 15662-63, 15666-67, 15672-74, 15677-81). One may interpret the simultaneous blaming and commending of the past SPD/B90G government as the application of carrot and stick. Undoubtedly, the aim was to calm down the debate and make the opposition realise that the topic would not be easy to benefit from. In theoretical terms, P_1 showed that for P_2 the gain of $+a_2$ would not come without a price of $-d_2$.

Representatives of the Left again pointed to the *PolG*'s provisions of human rights, sustainable development and other laudable notions. These would too often get blocked out by foreign policy interests. In consequence, they deemed the *PolG* insufficient and offered their 16 petitions to parliament. Thus its members could at least decide on a single-case basis if they deemed a full ban on exports to be too much. They furthermore criticised that no member of Chancellor *Merkel's* cabinet participated in the plenary session. In support of their position they provided figures from a very recent survey (PP 17/133, 15668-70).

In early October 2011, the Left had commissioned a representative survey conducted by German polling institute *Emnid* about the public's opinion on arms exports. It found a remarkable 78% of respondents opposed to all arms exports and 20% generally in favour, some of them emphasising the need of certain preconditions to be fulfilled. Putting these 20% under further scrutiny it was found that 79% of them opposed arms exports into states that violated human rights. 65% of those 20% opposed such exports into regions at war or in crisis. In general, only 7% of all respondents remained as unconditionally supportive of arms exports. Asked explicitly regarding Saudi Arabia, 90% rejected arms exports to respective countries with a record of violating human rights (Emnid 2011).

The survey furthermore yields instructive results regarding party affiliation. It may hardly be a surprise that the Left's followers would be most opposed to German arms exports, as the party favoured a general ban on German arms exports. Accordingly, supporters of the the Left favoured such a ban with a share of 88%. However, supporters of other parties did not differ too remarkably. 81% of B90G supporters, 79% of SPD supporters, 72% of FDP supporters and 67% of CDU²⁸ supporters favoured a general ban on German arms exports (Emnid 2011). Hence, while supporters of the Left and the CDU differed by 21%, it is still worth noting

²⁸The CSU is no mentioned in that survey, thus suggesting that it was not conducted among Bavarians. Questions about the survey's true representativeness thus remain.

that two-thirds of CDU supporters, the main governmental party, opposed arms exports. Recall the German government's aim to integrate arms export policies of the EU's member states as mentioned in section 6.1. In connection with Chancellor *Merkel's* demand to include the public in this integration process and to consider its interests, this should be a signal. Yet expectably, no similar follow-up surveys have been commissioned by the federal government.

Instead, a survey conducted by German polling institute *Forsa* and commissioned by TV station *RTL* and weekly *Stern* in the summer of 2012 showed a similar tendency. It found 61% of respondents to oppose arms exports and 33% in favour. Controlled for 'old' and 'new' German states the survey found 59% of West Germans opposed to such exports while the figure was 74% among East Germans (N-TV 2012). While this survey still showed an overall majority opposed to Germany's international arms trades, the differences to the above survey provide room for interpretation. Most likely the topic had lost in significance for the public in 2012. The controversially debated MBT trade had taken place a year prior. What is more, the MENA uprisings seemed to have largely consolidated from a mainstream perspective, while exceptions like Syria, Egypt and Libya did of course remain. The next controversial arms export decision, a similar alleged Leopard II MBT trade with Qatar, would surface in late July 2012 (Spiegel 2012a). Yet it would not spark the same degree of debate that the alleged 2011 trade had triggered in the midst of the MENA uprisings.

Another fact regarding public opinion on arms exports is instructive. *Forschungsgruppe Wahlen* (FGW), a German institute for election analysis, conducts regular, representative surveys on societal issues, popularity of politicians and current voting intentions of respondents. The issue of arms exports played no role in their survey released on the 15th of July 2011. Instead the survey identified the European debt crisis and the stability of the €, unemployment, state debt and nuclear power as the country's currently most important and pressing issues (FGW 2011). Conducted between the 12th and 14th of July, not even a full week after the heated debates in parliament, this clearly indicates the topic's overall marginality, despite all emotions it might have caused in some people. It was apparently not a topic the FGW deemed necessary to cover in their survey. Accordingly, the issue of German arms exports was neither addressed in any later survey by FGW.

B90G once more accused the government of breaching and not properly applying the *PolG*. According to media reports, the preliminary request for the export of the Leopard II MBTs had been positively decided upon on the 27th of June. However, since a rejection was possible at any time B90G demanded exactly this. They had brought in a petition of their own, demanding that arms export decisions must not be made at the expense of human rights (PP 17/133, 15670-72, 15674-75). Representatives of the SPD accused the government of supplying oppressive regimes with arms while verbally supporting the uprising people of the MENA region. In doing so it would forfeit the credibility of Germany's foreign policy. Once more, the SPD suspected lobbyists' influence to be a reason for the government's actions. The party admitted mistakes by its own former government, yet rejected the idea that any of its export decisions could be compared to the trade of 200 Leopard II MBTs. It endorsed B90G's petition and brought in its own petition which called for the reinforcement of a restrictive arms export policy (PP 17/133, 15664-66, 15673, 15675-77).

True to announcements made during the debate, SPD and B90G on the one hand largely abstained in the vote on the Left's 16 petitions, with a changing handful of MdBs opposing them.²⁹ Equally, parliamentarians of the Left abstained from the vote on the SPD's petition, with equally a handful of parliamentarians opposing it. However, the three opposition parties united in voting for B90G's petition that arms exports must not be made at the expense of human rights. With the government parties CDU/CSU and FDP unanimously voting against them, all 18 petitions were subsequently rejected (PP 17/133, 15817-62). Arms exports to the MENA region did not become a topic of the Bundestag again in 2011.

Regarding interpellations a clear picture can be drawn. In October 2011, the Left inquired about the export of new weapons of war and relinquishment of such material. In this interpellation, exports to Saudi Arabia played an explicit role. The Left asked about the decision on preliminary enquiries by exporting companies taken by the Federal Foreign Office and the Ministry of Economy (BT 17/7078, 3). In its answer, the former Ministry pointed to corporate secrecy while the latter confirmed positive decisions on the export of various small arms. Beyond that it pointed to the next *REB* for information (BT 17/7327, 8). Continuing B90G's interpellation from April, the Left furthermore inquired about the export of small arms production equipment to third countries. Saudi Arabia was covered in detail in this interpellation (BT 17/7628). Besides pointing to the documents guiding export decisions covered thoroughly before, the government emphasised that no independent production of German small arms in Saudi Arabia and other countries would be enabled. The continuing necessity to supply essential parts from Germany would ensure this (BT 17/7926).³⁰ Other opposition parties were inactive in the use of interpellations on the issue of arms exports in relation to the MENA region in the second half of 2011. The Left was the only opposition party to apply it. Whether one wants to see this as critical fulfilment of its tasks as part of the parliamentary opposition or as symbolic clientele politics is open for interpretation.

6.6 Coverage in selected media outlets from July to December 2011

It is not only important to know how political parties framed the issue of German arms exports to the MENA region. As established in section 3.5.1, the people and thus the electorate of a country are almost completely dependent on the media regarding their government's foreign policy. They need the media to gain sufficient knowledge and information to form an opinion about foreign policy. This is especially the case when the government has an interest in providing information itself only to a degree that is as limited as possible. As I have shown above this was likely the approach of the German government in 2011.

In order to draw a picture of German media's coverage of the purported MBT deal with Saudi Arabia, I

²⁹B90G had deemed the Left's petitions too undifferentiated and hence counterproductive. As an example they named countries like Syria which were already under an arms embargo. In this case a full ban on exports could only amount to a ban regardless of future developments and, according to B90G, would thus be shortsighted. Like B90G, the SPD announced it would abstain in the vote on the Left's petitions, calling them inappropriate for the issue's complexity and not suitable. See PP 17/133, 15666, 15672.

³⁰In addition to these, the Left raised interpellations regarding the human rights situation in Algeria's Kabylie region, German arms exports in connection with child soldiers and a general definition of the arms industry. See interpellations BT 17/7242, 17/7694 and 17/7795 as well as answers BT 17/7350, 17/7929 and 17/8097.

6.6. COVERAGE IN SELECTED MEDIA OUTLETS FROM JULY TO DECEMBER 2011

Media outlet	Affiliation/Subject ³¹	Circulation ³²	Articles analysed for July to Dec. 2011	Articles analysed in 2013
Bild	conservative	2,435,404	9	3
Handelsblatt	financial, economy	116,498	17	14
Die Tageszeitung	left-wing, left-alternative	54,806	15	8
Die Welt	conservative, right-wing	202,630	30	8

Table 6.3: Media outlets selected for analysis

This table illustrates the four newspapers selected for a comparative analysis in this thesis. The analysis entails coverage of media coverage of the MBT deal in July 2011 within the bigger picture of German arms exports in 2011 and 2013. This should yield insights into media framing of the issue. Information here include title, political affiliation or subject matter, circulation and the number of articles consulted.

will compare a range of German media actors. To this end, I have selected the online versions of four German newspapers to be included in this comparison. I have pointed out in section 3.5.1 that I expect any media actor to cover an issue of a certain prominence. It cannot afford to or has no interest in completely ignoring it and thus leaving it to its competitors. Hence the important task is to identify certain interpretations of the issue that an individual media outlet attempts to construct in its coverage. While I expect all outlets under scrutiny to cover the issue more than just in passing, it should be instructive to see which aspects each one emphasises. Accordingly, I rather focus on unique characteristics than on common aspects.

My selection is based on the criteria political affiliation, primary subject matter and target audience respectively, expressly not on circulation. The newspaper *Die Welt* is considered to be politically conservative. In this political spectrum it is considered one of the flagships together with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. As a political counterpart I selected *Die Tageszeitung*, a smaller yet well-established newspaper with generally left-leaning and also green affiliation, also based in Berlin. Both newspapers are dailies. *Handelsblatt* is a daily newspaper with its subject in economics and business. It is published in Düsseldorf and is one of the most important German newspapers of its kind. A business-focused view should prove itself interesting in the issue at hand. The newspaper *Bild* is easily the most controversial mainstream newspaper in Germany. Politically conservative, it is published in Berlin by publisher *Axel Springer SE* which also publishes *Die Welt*. Since both newspapers share a publisher and have an equal political affiliation one may ask why both are under scrutiny here. This is a valid objection. The important fact is that *Die Welt* and *Bild* serve very different audiences. While the former serves an intellectual, highly educated audience, the latter has a primarily working class readership. Moreover, *Bild* enjoys a circulation of which, in mere numbers, other newspapers can only dream.

³¹ According to Worldpress.org, Brocchi 2008.

³² According to the *Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V.* (IVW), retrieved from: <http://daten.ivw.eu/index.php?menuid=1111&u=&p=&b=a&t=Tageszeitungen+Gesamtliste>.

6.6.1 Analysis

Bild

“Setzt sich am Ende der ‘Irre von Teheran’ durch, Irans Präsident Mahmud Ahmadinedschad? Oder bleibt Saudi-Arabien so stark, dass in der Region zumindest ein [sic] Machtbalance herrscht?”³³

BILD, on the 6th of July 2011

On the 5th of July 2011, *Bild* reported that Saudi Arabia had apparently already bought 44 Leopard MBTs from Germany and intended to buy 200 on the whole. B90G and SPD were both cited with the assertion that such a deal would clearly violate export guidelines. The concerns of the CDU’s human rights expert *Erika Steinbach* were also presented. With regard to defence of the deal in the CDU, given the consensus of the USA and Israel and the threat of Iran, *Bild* called this controversy within the CDU a *severe dispute* (Bild 05.07.2011). This somewhat sensationalist approach is complemented by a following article. *Bild* talked to expert *Jan Grebe* of the *Bonn International Center for Conversion* (BICC), primarily summing up the superiority of the Leopard II MBT and its popularity with armed forces all over the world. The crowd control capabilities of the A7+ version seemingly sought after by Saudi Arabia, their suitability for internal repression and the signal the deal would send amidst the MENA uprisings were addressed in the end (Bild 06.07.2011a).

Bild covered the upcoming question time in the Bundestag. It stated the government’s continued silence on the issue and its refusal to participate in the parliamentary debate while Parliamentary State Secretary MdB *Otto* defended the BSR’s secrecy as long-established. SPD chairman MdB *Gabriel* was cited with the accusation of *cowardice* and B90G’s parliamentary group leader with the assertion that the German government sided with despotism. *Bild* further cited criticism by a former chairman of the FDP and representatives of the catholic and evangelic church. Expert *Guido Steinberg*, an expert of the think tank *Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik* (SWP), warned against the MBT’s use for internal repression, considering the fact that it would be militarily useless for the country, considering a lack of qualified and motivated personnel. Despite this fact, he deemed it probable that the German, US and Israeli governments approved of the deal to strengthen Saudi Arabia against Iran. *Steinberg* noted the MBT’s uselessness against Iran for geographical reasons alone. He thus saw prestige and the testing of foreign relationships as Saudi Arabia’s main motivation. Moreover, he expected the region’s dictatorships to approve of such a deal while it would irritate the protesters. Thus the expert deemed it necessary for the German government to explain how it would seek to harmonise its efforts for the region’s stability and democratisation (Bild 06.07.2011b, 06.07.2011c).

Bild further elaborated on the purported threat by Iran, citing expert *Grebe* who identified Saudi Arabia as a strategic ally of the United States. Another expert, *Henning Riecke* of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik* (DGAP), equally identified the deal as a power political signal to Iran and other countries in the region. According to *Bild*, the question of Iran’s struggle to be the region’s hegemonic power is, due to the region’s oil

³³The quotation in my own translation: “Will in the end the ‘madman of Tehran’ prevail, Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad? Or will Saudi Arabia remain strong enough, so that there will be at least a balance of power in the region?”; see Bild 06.07.2011c.

wealth, of concern for the world's economy. Support for the rather solidified Saudi regime is grounded in the desire to keep the region from a plunge into chaos should the Saudi monarchy fall. The *tinder box Near East* could explode, as *Bild* put it (Bild 06.07.2011c). The notion promoted by critics that more arms could equally make the tinder box explode was not addressed.

The second plenary session on the issue on the 8th of July was covered by *Bild* without any details. The opposition's petitions were rejected while the government still did not release any information. Apart from that, *Bild* provided information on the range of countries using the Leopard, once again noting the high esteem in which it is held by professionals (Bild 07.07.2011, 08.07.2011). Revealingly, *Bild* ended its coverage of the issue with the CDU's Minister of Defence *Thomas de Maizière* warning the SPD against further criticism. According to *Bild*, he remembered very well who had argued for what during common times of CDU/CSU and SPD in the BSR. Despite its regrettable human rights situation, the country's stability was in Germany's security interest. To draw connections between the MBT deal and German oil interests was *absurd*. *Bild* noted that Germany was among the world's largest exporters of arms during the grand coalition (2005-2009), the SPD/B90G government (1998-2005) and before. The critics' reply to this was that Germany had never before exported arms to Saudi Arabia that could be used to quell uprisings (Bild 16.07.2011).

While *Bild* cited voices from all political camps, not limiting itself to political parties, its emphasis becomes visible through additional focal points. On the one hand it praised the Leopard II MBT by providing detailed information which, nevertheless, contributed little to the actual debate. On the other hand *Bild* clearly elaborated on the governmental parties' argument of strengthening Saudi Arabia against Iran, hardly questioning it. In summary, *Bild* can be seen as rather supportive of the government's alleged policy in that it did not expressly criticise it.

Die Tageszeitung – taz

“Mit den Potentaten hatte man sich doch stabil eingerichtet. Das Erdöl floss, Israel blieb weitgehend unbehelligt, die potenzielle regionale Großmacht Iran war isoliert. Wen schert es da, wenn mit Hilfe saudi-arabischer Panzer noch im Juni Proteste der Bevölkerung im Nachbarland, dem Königreich Bahrain, blutig niedergeschlagen wurden?”³⁴

Taz, on the 4th of July 2011

Taz first covered the purported sale of 200 Leopard II MBTs to Saudi Arabia on the 4th of July 2011. It reported the opposition's demand for a parliamentary question time and quoted criticism by parliamentarians of B90G and the Left. The government, its parliamentary groups and also the Saudi Arabian government did not provide any further information. Besides, *taz* mentioned past efforts by Saudi Arabia to purchase German

³⁴The quotation in my own translation: “After all one had made ends meet in a stable fashion with the potentates. Petroleum poured, Israel remained largely undisturbed, the potential regional major power Iran was isolated. Who cares then when only in June, with the aid of Saudi Arabian tanks, popular protests in the neighbouring country, the Kingdom of Bahrain, were bloodily crushed?”; see taz 04.07.2011b.

MBTs that had always been unsuccessful. In the 1980s it had been Israel which vetoed an otherwise approved sale of Leopard MBTs (taz 04.07.2011a).

Two commentators in *taz*, *Hermannus Pfeiffer* and *Eric Chauvistré*, disagreed whether this was owed to a change of strategy. *Pfeiffer* held that the government was acting geostrategically and in line with the USA. He explained this with the government's apparent sense of distrust of the *Arab Spring* and the stability the MENA's potentates had maintained, despite all shortcomings. *Chauvistré* rejected the government's secrecy as *pompous* and deemed its reason not as the protection of a governmental strategy. Instead he regarded the prevention of public debate as the secrecy's sole purpose. Considering the continuity of all past governments in the matter, he demanded an end to secrecy for the sake of democratic control. After all, he argued, military policy was in the domain of the German parliament, not in that of the government. Arms exports would result in participation in conflict and would thus be a part of military policy, he argued (taz 04.07.2011b, 05.07.2011a). *Nassauer*, head of *BITS* writing for *taz*, went further in speculation, pondering whether Israel was expecting a reward for its approval of such a deal. This approval was finally given due to the reception of Iran as a more serious threat than Saudi Arabia. He agreed with *Pfeiffer* that such a deal could be labelled *responsible* if Saudi Arabia was characterised as a factor of stability in the region. By no means was it *restrictive*, a label the government had consciously abandoned as a label for its arms exports decisions (taz 05.07.2011c). In fact, *taz* covered the notion of Saudi Arabia as a *guardian of the old order* in a separate article, explaining the intervention in Bahrain as driven primarily by self-interest. It argued that in Bahrain a Shia majority is governed by a Sunni minority, in close proximity to Saudi Arabia's Shia-dominated prime region of oil production. Thus the interests of Saudi Arabia, the US and Iran converged on Bahrain, *taz* argued (taz 06.07.2011a).

On the 6th of July, *taz* reviewed the parliamentary debate discussed in section 6.3. The newspaper identified Parliamentary State Secretary MdB *Otto* as the person with *the most unpleasant job in the entire federal government* on this Wednesday afternoon. *Taz* judged that MdB *Otto* had been tasked with *as nonchalantly as possible beating around the bush*. Parliamentarians of the opposition parties were quoted with critical comments while a parliamentarian of the FDP was quoted as saying that economic interests are secondary. Apart from that, representatives of the government, MdB *Otto* just as government spokesman *Steffen Seibert* would only invoke the necessity of the BSR's secrecy (taz 06.07.2011b). Criticism from inside the governmental parties had been indicated but not commented on by anyone in the position to do so (taz 05.07.2011b).

B90G MdB *Ströbele*'s suspicion that bribe money may have been involved was prominently covered. He was reported as threatening to use a constitutional challenge if no information would be provided by the federal government. The MdB maintained this threat the following week, saying that the government's secrecy proved its *fear of the debate* (taz 11.07.2011). Interestingly, *taz* quoted *Horst Teltschik*, former director of the *Munich Security Conference*, as saying that such a deal would be *more than alarming*. Saudi Arabia was fiercely opposed to the process of change in the Arab world (taz 07.07.2011). On the 8th of July, the day of the second debate in parliament, *taz* indirectly quoted Chancellor *Merkel*. She defended the BSR's secrecy and rejected the accusation of a lack of transparency. *Taz* pointed to the disagreement within the governmental parties

who, however, would reject the petition. Regarding the Left's petition to retroactively stop the deal, however, representatives of those parties expected the petition's unanimous rejection in the roll-call vote. Still, MdBs of FDP and CDU were cited with asking the government for an official statement so as to not leave the stage to the critics (*taz* 08.07.2011). They encouraged to continue handling arms exports into countries which noticeably do not respect human rights and do not curb terrorism very restrictively (*taz* 11.07.2011). In the end of the month, *taz* once more covered MdB *Ströbele's* constitutional challenge. The MdB appeared optimistic that the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe would strengthen parliament and opposition vis-à-vis the BSR.³⁵ Besides the politicians supporting the challenge, *taz* also quoted members of the parliamentary coalition, arguing for protection of Germany's relations with and interests of the recipient countries. FDP parliamentary group leader *Rainer Brüderle's* assertion that whoever discloses details from the BSR should be prosecuted, is quoted with hardly hidden disapprobation.

A week after the heated days of the debate, *taz* reported that the German Bundeswehr was currently testing the Leopard II MBT in the United Arab Emirates. *Taz* ironically added that there was, of course, no connection to the German-Saudi arms trade. The short report ended with a reference to the Saudi Arabian intervention in Bahrain and the fact that the Shia opposition had just withdrawn from the national dialogue for reform (*taz* 19.07.2011).

In October 2011, *taz* interviewed MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul*, member of the BSR from 1998 to 2009, and a vocal critic in the parliamentary debates in July (see section 6.2). She admitted that past exports, also of governments with her participation, had been a mistake. However, she maintained that the MBT export, now that Saudi Arabia had proven its willingness to deploy armored vehicles against civilians, was of a whole different quality. The former Federal Minister remained hopeful that public pressure could still reverse the decision. During the interview, MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul* mentioned her party's petition from March 2011 to include the parliament into decisions on arms exports. *Taz* then ended the interview with the critical question whether a future government possibly headed by the SPD would remember that petition. The MdB claimed to further promote this idea on an upcoming federal party congress. She further recommended to any peace initiative and NGO to make this question a touchstone in future elections, regardless of the political party (*taz* 19.10.2011). Around the discussion of the Left's petitions to stop exports to 16 different countries in the MENA region, *taz* revisited the topic again. *Taz* noted the governmental parties' lack of arguments besides strengthening Saudi Arabia against Iran, the region's future hegemon. It quoted B90G as grateful to the Left for that it had put the issue on the parliament's agenda once more. In connection with this gratitude, it noted the abstention of B90G and SPD in the subsequent votes on the 16 petitions with a bit of sarcasm (*taz* 20.10.2011).

The coverage of the issue in *taz* shows a clear bias for the critical voices in the opposition. The newspaper critically joined the opposition parties in the disapproval of the government's secretive approach. It also gave relatively much space to MdB *Ströbele's* constitutional challenge. Apart from that, months after the heated debate MdB *Wieczorek-Zeul* was given the opportunity to explain herself. The governmental coalition's much-

³⁵This topic is revisited in section 7.4.

cited argument of strengthening Israel against Iran was largely dismissed.

Die Welt

*“Wir befinden uns also in einem sehr heiklen Moment in der Geschichte des Nahen Ostens, der viele Gefahren, aber auch viele Gelegenheiten bietet. Der große Preis, den der Westen erringen könnte, wäre ein Sturz des syrischen Regimes, der dann die Mullahs in Teheran mitzieht. Erst wenn diese Machtachse zerfallen ist, kann man neu über die Saudis nachdenken. Bis dahin jedoch sollten wir das Saudi-Arabien stärken, das wir haben, anstatt auf das zu hoffen, das wir uns wünschen.”*³⁶

WELT, on the 9th of July 2011

Welt began covering the issue as early as the 3rd of July 2011. Citing other sources, the German government had apparently approved of selling 200 Leopard II A7+ MBTs to Saudi Arabia. *Welt* furthermore mentioned earlier attempts by the country to acquire past versions of the weapons system (Welt 2011.07.03). These were also referenced when more voices on the issue had been heard. The silence and reference to secrecy by government officials was reported just as was the widespread criticism by politician’s of the opposition, calling the deal *insensitive*, *illegal* and support of the protesters in the MENA region *lip service*. Interestingly, *Welt* cited the federal foreign office’s very critical assessment of Saudi Arabia’s human rights situation (Welt 05.07.2011).

A day later, the newspaper reported critical voices from the CDU and thus from within the governmental coalition which urged parliamentary participation. The FDP was, at this point, only cited with trust in the government’s decision-making, with particular regard to the safety of Israel (Welt 06.07.2011). Another day later, after the parliament’s question time, *Welt* referenced critical voices from all governmental parties, among them MdB *Steinbach*. However, former parliamentarians of these parties voiced their discontent, like a former FDP chairman and a former CDU Federal Minister of Defence. *Welt* noted the governmental parties’ unrewarding task to take a stance on an undisclosed trade, due to the government’s upheld secrecy. The opposition continued to attack the government’s alleged decisions as a *breach of law* and siding with despotism (Welt 07.07.2011a). As *Welt* reported later, another former CDU Federal Minister of Defence called for the deal’s revocation (Welt 12.07.2011).

Welt covered the accusation by B90G MdB *Ströbele* that bribery may have been involved in the deal and his consideration to file a constitutional challenge. Representatives of the government were only cited with the reference to the BSR’s secrecy and to Saudi Arabia as an important stabilising factor in the region, furthermore rejecting *Ströbele*’s suspicion as *utterly unfounded* (Welt 07.07.2011b, 11.07.2011a). *Welt* noted the government’s silence on the deal as such in connection with the repeated commendation of Saudi Arabia as an *anchor of stability* in the region as a recurring pattern (Welt 09.07.2011a). Federal Minister of Economic

³⁶The quotation in my own translation: “We find ourselves in a very delicate moment in the history of the Near East that offers many dangers but also many opportunities. The grand prize the West could win is the overthrow of the Syrian regime which then drags along the mullahs of Tehran. Only when this axis of power has disintegrated, can we reconsider the Saudis. Until then, however, we should strengthen the Saudi Arabia that we have, instead of hoping for the one that we want.”; see Welt 09.07.2011b.

Cooperation and Development *Dirk Niebel* (FDP) later supported the deal, saying that arms exports could very well protect human rights by stabilising a region. This was the case, if not in the receiving country, then at least in the neighbouring countries (Welt 20.07.2011).

In addition to *Ströbele*, B90G MdB *Volker Beck* filed charges against KMW to pressure the government into the disclosure of information. As he argued, there was reasonable suspicion that the KWKG had been violated. Apart from that, the governmental parties announced that the Left's demand for a roll-call vote to stop the deal would be met. The FDP criticised the Left's course of action nonetheless, arguing that all questions had been elaborated on during the question time on the 6th of July (Welt 08.07.2011a, 08.07.2011b). Although the FDP's MdB *Stinner* asked the government to not leave the stage to the critics alone, his party's coalition partner CDU/CSU expressed confidence that the Left's petition would be rejected.

Chancellor *Merkel*, outside of parliament, defended the BSR's secrecy (Welt 08.07.2011c, 08.07.2011d). According to *Welt* the B90G's chairwoman *Claudia Roth* found that the government's sole communication via the media in combination with its silence in parliament constituted a mockery of the parliament (Welt 09.07.2011d). On the contrary, *Welt* reported the defence of the government's approach of secrecy through Federal President *Christian Wulff* (CDU), Germany's head of state. For decades the parliament did not deem any changes of the practice necessary which had always been consensual (Welt 10.07.2011d). In its coverage of the parliament's voting on and subsequent rejection of the opposition's three petitions, *Welt* noted the chancellor's attendance sometime after MdB *Gabriel* had criticised her absence. *Welt* cited all parties, including the FDP's accusation of hypocrisy against the opposition (Welt 08.07.2011e). In this context, Minister *de Maizièrè's* statement towards the SPD has to be seen. He had stated that he still remembered very well who had argued for what during common times in the BSR. In the same article, *Welt* reported a concession by MdB *Roth* about earlier small arms exports to Saudi Arabia by her party. She asserted, however, that small arms and MBTs were two different dimensions (Welt 17.07.2011). In response to this, *Welt* later cited an NGO representative who stated that in mere numbers of war casualties small arms are far deadlier than tanks (Welt 20.07.2011).

While MdB *Gabriel* had dismissed the protection against Iran as an invalid argument (Welt 08.07.2011e), the emphasis on this argument in the coverage by *Welt* is remarkable. As early as on the 4th of July, before even many official statements regarding the deal had been made, commentator *Clemens Wergin* interpreted the deal as necessary. *Wergin* noted a shift in the region's fundamental animosity, now being defined by the axis of *Iran-Syria-Hezbollah-Hamas* against the region's moderate regimes. Considering the Saudi regime's announcement to pursue the procurement of own nuclear arms if Iran should succeed in doing so (Guardian 29.06.2011), he approved of the German arms shipment. According to him, only a Saudi Arabia with an effective deterrent force of conventional arms could prevent such a nuclear arms race (Welt 04.07.2011). Commentator *Michael Stürmer* agreed in seeing the animosity of Sunnite Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran as the region's primary antagonism. He argued in a similar vein that a stable Saudi Arabia was crucial to a stable world community (Welt 07.07.2011d). *Wergin* later noted Saudi Arabia, despite all its flaws and shortcomings from a Western perspective, as a reliable and long-established partner. Its destabilisation amidst the MENA uprisings would

be nothing less than negligent. With regard to the opposition's indignation of supporting the Saudi Arabian regime, *Wergin* pointed out that its actual stabilisation happened everyday by simple fossil energy consumption (Welt 09.07.2011b). Complementing the general drift on Iran, *Welt* covered the *other half of the world of weapons* which concerned countries to which Western governments would not sell arms due to embargoes and political considerations. Here, *Welt* identified the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China as the most important suppliers of such countries, including Iran. It stated that these countries had less scruples in the selection of their arms' recipients (Welt 09.07.2011c³⁷). In their partisanship for the export of German MBTs to Saudi Arabia none of the commentators in *Welt* addressed the risk of a conventional arms race or the fact that Saudi Arabia and Iran do not share a land border.

In December, *Welt* reported that the Saudi Arabian order had grown to 270 Leopard II MBTs. According to MdB *van Aken*, he received the confirmation from a responsible Saudi Arabian general and the German military attaché at the German embassy in Riyadh during an official visit. As *Welt* reported, the former confirmation appeared very differently in his report to parliament which stated that the general had disclosed nothing of significance. The latter confirmation was denied by the federal foreign office upon request. MdB *Van Aken* later confirmed that he had struck a deal with a journalist of German weekly *Die Zeit* to publish his insights exclusively and deemed the AA's denial insolent. While *Welt* argued that this deal would make sense for the MdB to ensure the greatest possible publicity, the newspaper still saw him in critical position since he had allegedly withheld information from his official report (Welt 07.12.2011, 08.12.2011, 09.12.2011).

With the sheer extent of its coverage, *Welt* managed to provide a very diverse picture of opinions on the MBT trade. While it was not short of offering critical voices it also provided support for the government which was not considered in other outlets. Most remarkably, the commentators in *Welt* extensively and early on developed the government's argument regarding Iran and the threat it constituted. This emphasis greatly exemplifies the overall support for the government's alleged actions.

Handelsblatt

*“Angesichts der öffentlichen Empörung über die neuerliche Instinktlosigkeit kann sich die Regierung nicht länger in Schweigen hüllen. Deutschland darf sich nicht dem Verdacht aussetzen, es wolle aus der Krise in Nahen Osten auch noch Kapital schlagen. Es hat allen Grund, Rüstungsexporte doppelt und dreifach zu prüfen – und im Zweifelsfall gegen die Lieferung von Kriegswaffen zu entscheiden.”*³⁸

HANDELSBLATT, on the 7th of July 2011

Handelsblatt began its coverage of the debate on the 4th of July with a rather long article, citing critical voices of opposition parties with arguments discussed earlier. Among them were the violation of the *PolG* by

³⁷SIPRI is falsely called a *security research institute* in this article.

³⁸The quotation in my own translation: “In the face of public indignation the government must not maintain its silence any longer. Germany may not subject itself to the suspicion that it is trying to exploit the crisis in the Near East. It has every reason to inspect arms exports twice and threefold – and in case of doubt to decide against the supply of weapons of war.”; see HB 07.07.2011c.

exporting into an unstable region and the *disaster for its credibility* that the government accepted with the deal. It mentioned the BSR and several responsible personnel from the government, even if only to state that they did not give any comments. According to its sources, 44 Leopard II MBTs had already been supplied to Saudi Arabia (HB 04.07.2011). Saudi Arabian officials remained largely silent on the matter, apart from saying that alternatives were at hand, should the deal fail. Like any other country, Saudi Arabia had to arm itself, and promised to only use the tanks against external threats (HB 06.07.2011b). *Handelsblatt* then commented on a video by the Bundeswehr which praised the tanks newest version Leopard II A7+ as especially effective against aggressive demonstrators. While it repeated the opposition's criticism and covered plans for a question time in parliament, it also gave room to critics from within the governmental coalition. Advocates defended Saudi Arabia as an important ally, *Handelsblatt* reported (HB 05.07.2011a). The newspaper elaborated on the CDU/CSU's internal controversy whose MdB *Steinbach* pointed to the endorsement of human rights by Chancellor *Merkel* and Minister *Westerwelle*. In this context, such exports should not be allowed easily. *Handelsblatt* mentioned such unrest in the FDP as well, an MdB of which asked for the appropriate discretion in the decision (HB 05.07.2011b).

In the heat of the debate in early July, *Handelsblatt* put an effort into covering the background of the deal. It addressed the rise of arms exports in general and the international interest in high-quality German arms in particular. A drop in domestic orders made the arms industry seek new markets while it simultaneously went to court over cut contracts, supported by according unions. More interestingly, it covered the German public's uneasiness with the topic as it did not fit the country's *peaceful self-image*, despite the matter's strict regulation through law (HB 05.07.2011c). *Steinberg* of think tank SWP is cited as saying that Saudi Arabia could not even properly use such an amount of tanks militarily due to a lack of trained personnel. However, he warned of the possibility that the tanks could be used against oppositional Shiites in the country's east. It not only quoted critical voices from the opposition but also from former prominent figures of FDP and CDU, a former head of Amnesty International (AI) in Germany and two German bishops, one catholic and one evangelic. According to an expert of the University of Hamburg, the rise in German arms exports had been indicated in the government's coalition contract in 2009 (HB 06.07.2011a). *Handelsblatt* reported that while the debate within Saudi Arabia was limited to a few interested people, criticism was furthermore directed at Germany from Iranian TV channel *Press TV* (HB 06.07.2011b).

Naturally, *Handelsblatt* covered the question time in the Bundestag and noted the absence of Chancellor *Merkel* and her Ministers. The governmental coalition's defence is summed up with the notions of the BSR's necessary secrecy, Saudi Arabia as an important partner, security interests and past arms exports (see section 6.3). Equally, the opposition's accusations of cowardice and support of despotism against the government are quoted directly. MdB *Ströbele's* suspicion of bribery and his constitutional challenge are covered as well. MdB *van Aken* demanded the governmental parties to stop accepting party donations from arms manufacturers, practiced in the past by CDU/CSU, FDP and SPD.³⁹ *Handelsblatt* added that Israeli officials did not comment

³⁹On party donations by arms manufacturers see section 6.4

either (HB 07.07.2011a, 07.07.2011b). Later, the newspaper reported that without any surprise all the opposition's petitions had been rejected by parliament, noting that still only second-tier personnel of the governmental coalition participated in the debate. The chancellery added that Saudi Arabia had not received any tanks yet. Parliamentary Group leader of the CDU, *Kauder* added that such a deal would not happen within the next two or three years anyway. Apart from that, no new arguments were offered (HB 08.07.2011). In several interviews, notably outside of parliament, Chancellor *Merkel* and several Ministers praised Saudi Arabia as an important ally, not uttering a single word on the arms deal. Like *taz*, *Handelsblatt* reported criticism by *Teltschik*, the former director of the *Munich Security Conference* and a former security policy advisor of chancellor *Helmut Kohl* (HB 07.07.2011).

Commentator *Christoph Rabe* deemed the government's arms deal in connection with its earlier inactivity in Libya to be a *disastrous signal*. In the face of public outrage and the suspicion of profiteering in the midst of the MENA uprisings, silence was no viable option. According to *Rabe*, the German government had, not for the first time, chosen the wrong side and demanded that it represent its fundamental values and not the interests of the arms industry (HB 07.07.2011c).

As the debate's heat died down and it became ever more clear that the government was not going to comment, *Handelsblatt* noted the opposition's efforts to turn the arms deal with Saudi Arabia into the silly season's dominant topic. The opposition was cited with continuous criticism, demanding parliamentary participation or at least information and marking the government's silence as a *low point of political culture*. Minister *Westerwelle's* upcoming speech about disarmament at the UN was anticipated with irony in light of the domestic debate. Human Rights Watch (HRW) was cited as well (HB 11.07.2011b, 11.07.2011c). SPD parliamentary group leader *Frank-Walter Steinmeier* deemed the deal *thoroughly wrong* but admits that an *unreachable moral standpoint* was not the proper criterion. Arms exports happened under other governments and would happen under future governments (HB 12.07.2011).

In December of 2011, five months after the lively debate, *Handelsblatt* reported that a Saudi Arabian general had confirmed the deal over 270 Leopard II A7+ while German administrative officials denied the claim (HB 07.12.2011). *Handelsblatt* followed up to this report the next day, once more citing criticism by the opposition of the government's secrecy and denials by German officials (HB 08.12.2011).

Handelsblatt tried to provide a rather universal picture of the events and in doing so cited diverse voices from politics and society. Exemplifying this, it even tried to include voices from Saudi Arabia. The newspaper dedicated a relatively large amount of space to the deal's background and emphasised critical voices from the governmental parties. In doing so it was less emphatic about business concerns than one might have thought. Of the newspapers under scrutiny here it easily appears as the one trying to be most objective.

6.6.2 Summary

All media actors analysed above covered the debates of July 2011 and the discussion surrounding German arms exports to the MENA region to a certain extent. Furthermore, all of them covered critical voices in the debate

and, like the parliamentarians, regarded the government's approach of secrecy with some skepticism. Similarly, none of the newspapers spared criticism on the unfavourable human rights situation in Saudi Arabia.

Yet there were important distinctions to be identified. The conservative *Welt* and *Bild* elaborated approvingly on the strengthening of Saudi Arabia against the perceived threat of Iran. This is remarkable as said notion was not even discussed in such prominence in parliament. *Taz* showed a clear bias in favour of the critical voices, dismissing certain arguments, such as the threat of Iran, with open disapproval. The coverage by *Handelsblatt* was the most balanced one of the analysed newspapers.

In the classification presented by LOUW the former two newspapers appeared as *consent manufacturers* while the latter two as the *watchdogs* of classically liberal tradition (See section 3.5.1). However, none of them seemed to have any corrective influence, even on the parts that they agreed on regardless of political affiliation, such as the matter of insufficient transparency. To the extent that this short analysis can show it, it seems that media actors are not the appropriate player to make a government move from policy *C* to policy *D*. At least this seems to hold for the marginal issue in discussion here.

Chapter 7

Election year 2013

7.1 January 2013: release of the Arms Export Report 2011

Conveniently, the debate on arms exports in the German parliament in 2013 began with a direct link to 2011. One of the topics in debate back then had been the long time it took the federal government to release the *REB*. It had also been one of the few details that governmental and opposition parties in parliament could agree on in 2011. The *REB* for the year 2011 was finally published in late 2012 and debated in January 2013.

Which questions that had been brought up in the debates of 2011 did it answer? It is worthwhile to review some main pieces of information from that year's *REB*. The sum of all arms export applications admitted by the German administration amounted to 17,586 applications which equaled a monetary value of €5.414bn (BMWi 2011, 18). This includes both *weapons of war* and *other armaments*. The sheer number certainly supports the argument of the governmental coalition that an inclusion of parliament in the decision-making process by default was unrealistic. Facing the number of admissions is the number of only 105 applications that were rejected (BMWi 2011, 20).¹ The *REB* explains this discrepancy with the common practise of the preliminary request. Manufacturers would subsequently usually not apply for exports with bad prospects for admission and they would then not appear in the statistic. Yet the usefulness for the opposition's argument that German arms exports were not restrictive is obvious.

When considering only *weapons of war* the sum of all admitted applications amounted to €1.65bn with €804.1m being exported to third countries (BMWi 2011, 23). The individual share for Saudi Arabia in this was €29,021,738 (BMWi 2011, 24). Clearly, this sum did not contain the purported MBT deal that had been rumored to amount to around €1.5bn. This holds even if the numbers would have fit as the *REB* contains no information on preliminary export requests. The monetary value of all exports of *weapons of war* actually completed in 2011 amounted to €1.285bn, 32% of which were exported to EU, NATO and NATO-equivalent

¹Among the 37 countries to which exports were denied in 2011 are four of the MENA region: Bahrain, Israel, Libya and the UAE. The denials to Bahrain and Libya were the most (€8.6m) and third-most (€4.6m) valuable ones respectively. Saudi Arabia was not among those 37 countries.

	Granted export licences ²				Exports of weapons of war		
	Group 1 ³ in €m	Group 2 ⁴ in €m	Group 3 ⁵ in €m	Total in €m	Exports in €m	Share of Third Countries	Share of total exports
2009	1,445	1,106	2,492	5,043	1,339	24%	0.17%
2010	2,315	1,056	1,383	4,754	2,119	23%	0.22%
2011	1,954	1,162	2,298	5,414	1,285	68%	0.12%
2012	971	1,129	2,604	4,704	946	59%	0.09%
2013	1,169	1,071	3,606	5,846	933	67%	0.09%

Table 7.1: Selected figures regarding German arms exports from 2009 to 2013

This table presents various figures regarding German arms exports during the years 2009 to 2013. The first three columns present the respective values of all export licences granted to arms manufacturers for a certain group of recipient countries in that year. The fourth column presents the respective sum of the first three columns. The fifth column presents the respective value of all *weapons of war* actually exported in that year, while the sixth column presents the share of third countries of these values. The seventh column presents the share of exports of *weapons of war* in the overall German exports in a respective year.

This is only a small share of the information given in the REB but suffices to provide a picture. The only figure that shows a clear increase is the share of third countries among the recipients of *weapons of war*.

For references see BMWi 2009-2013.

countries (BMWi 2011, 30-31). Saudi Arabia's share in this was €29,599,000, by logic not containing the alleged 2011 deal in debate. The REB furthermore stated the share of all exports of *weapons of war* in the entirety of Germany's exports as 0.12% (BMWi 2011, 33). To anyone without further stakes in the arms industry, this cannot seem like a share too vital of Germany's export-oriented economy. Selected information from the report is compiled in table 7.1.

SIPRI noted the 2011 debate on the putative export of 200 Leopard 2 A7+ MBTs to Saudi Arabia in its Yearbook 2012.⁶ While the institute's researchers equally found the outrage to be explicitly motivated by the Saudi intervention in Bahrain, it naturally did not offer any more factual insights than the REB. In SIPRI's statistics, Germany was the world's fourth most important arms supplier from 2002 to 2006, surpassed by the USA, Russia and France. In the years 2007 to 2011, Germany had surpassed France. The overall 2011 exports of conventional arms⁷ amounted to €1.206bn, thus not differing much from figures in the REB. SIPRI does differentiate recipient countries by regions as opposed to strategic considerations.⁸ In this reading 41% of German exports of conventional arms were exported to European countries between 2007 and 2011. The

²Includes both *weapons of war* and *other armaments*.

³Member states of the EU.

⁴NATO countries and countries equivalent to NATO, namely Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Switzerland. Members of the EU are excluded from this group.

⁵Third countries, all countries which are not included in Groups 1 or 2.

⁶The debate of 2011 was mentioned again in the Yearbook 2013 along with similar debates in 2012. These surrounded a putative trade of Leopard 2 A7+ MBTs with Qatar and a confirmed trade involving 1,200 Fuchs APCs and two MEKO A-200 frigates with Algeria. The SIPRI researchers furthermore mentioned calls by all parliamentary groups "for greater transparency in arms export policies and improved parliamentary oversight over how these policies are implemented." As SIPRI cited PP 17/219, I will show that party positions were more differentiated. See Holtom et al. 2013, 251-252, quotation on 252.

⁷This term used by SIPRI is largely similar to the term *weapons of war* used by the German government.

⁸The group of EU and NATO countries and countries equivalent to NATO used by the German government mentioned in the above paragraph is clearly a strategic classification.

share shipped to countries of the MENA region during the same period is given as 11%⁹ (Holtom et al. 2012, 264-268).

In the Bundestag, the REB of 2011 was debated in connection with a range of petitions. The Left called for an end of arms exports as an instrument of foreign policy (DS 17/10842). The SPD demanded the report to be generally released earlier and to integrate the parliament to a greater extent into the decision-making process (DS 17/9188). B90G petitioned for a stricter control of arms exports with regard to the maintaining of peace and human rights (DS 17/9412). For the latter two petitions it was the final stage of debate before a decision. As these topics indicate, the conflicts between governmental coalition and parliamentary opposition had not fundamentally changed since 2011.

The SPD claimed that German arms exports had long lost a degree at which they could be called *restrictive*. It firmly rejected the notion of arms exports as a means to maintain peace. The party accused the current government of ambiguity although it did admit that past governments had made mistakes with certain exports. Its MdBs did explicitly criticise the fact that none of the debates concerning arms exports had been attended by any one member of the cabinet. In this context they did acknowledge some voices from the governmental parliamentary groups calling for more transparency and participation and demanded the release of the REB in a timelier manner. To this end, the SPD suggested the formation of a parliamentary committee not to influence but to monitor the government's export decisions. According to the party it was unacceptable that the parliament had to rely on the press to receive any timely information on the government's proceedings on the matter (PP 17/219, 27088-90, 27096-98).

Equally B90G asked for more parliamentary participation and transparency, announcing it would support the SPD's petition. The unpopularity of arms exports was no sufficient reason for secrecy, even though Chancellor *Merkel* may want to keep the parliament out of these decisions. The party called it *unworthy* that the government did not dare to present its decisions to a critical population and parliament. As the *PolG* had proven themselves to be overly weak, B90G's petition included to finally turn considerations regarding human rights, risk of inner repression and armed conflicts into decisive factors by law. The party announced that they rejected the Left's petition as counterproductive (PP 17/219, 27092-94).

The Left had opened the debate once more by accusing the government of a lack of transparency and restraint in allowing arms exports. It suggested to at least consider partial bans on such exports for a start, citing explicitly the Saudi Arabian intervention into Bahrain in early 2011. Such first steps could be limited for example to exports to the MENA region or to small arms, the *weapons of mass destruction of the 21st century*. The Left vigorously rejected the governmental parties' notion that restrictive arms exports could well support peace and human rights in the world. In addition, the Left developed its distinction from the rest of parliament in the matter. Their MdBs called the entirety of other parties a *grand coalition* of arms exports. They further

⁹This number is achieved by adding the figures for North Africa and the Middle East in the SIPRI statistic. Instructively, the figure for German exports of conventional arms to North Africa is 0% for the years 2007 to 2011. In the *REB* Algeria is mentioned as one of the main beneficiaries of granted export permissions in 2011. Its share in exports to third countries worth €804,1m is €214m. Hence the share of North Africa will rise considerably in the coming years. See Holtom et al. 2012, 264 and BMWi 2011, 24.

pointed out that transparency as such would not lessen the amounts of arms exported. Thus the only effective measure could be strict bans (PP 17/219, 27081-83, 27100-01).

One and a half years after the initial debate of July 2011, all parties still used the same arguments, albeit in a more practised manner. Owing to the debate's main topic, the focus had somewhat shifted away from events in the MENA region and Saudi Arabia. The opposition parties still criticised the government's alleged policy *C* and demanded reforms towards *D*. The Left still distinguished itself by demands that were too extensive for the other two opposition parties to support.

Besides support for timelier inclusion of the parliament, the FDP did not agree with the opposition's arguments. Its MdBs accused the opposition parties of deliberately confounding numbers to present the government in an unfavourable way, describing the difference between the government and the opposition as the distinction between *responsibility* and *populism*. They speculated that the opposition's only aim was to damage the governmental parties. At the same time the MdBs emphasised the former governmental parties' hypocrisy, in that the current government acted no differently than preceding ones. Decisions would continue to be based on foreign policy and security interests, taking into account human rights and to a lesser degree industry interests. They prophesied that there would be no change of government. Moreover, they criticised the opposition's *recycling* of old petitions and declared their awareness that they met them with the same answers. The FDP pointed out the necessity to maintain a domestic arms industry to supply Germany's armed forces. To this end exports were necessary as well (PP 17/219, 27090-92, 27098-99).

The CDU/CSU made a point against Germany as the third most prolific arms exporter in the world. In opposition to the SIPRI statistic they cited the CRS where Germany was a mere number 7.¹⁰ Their MdBs expressed pride in Germany's arms industry and defended exports as a means of foreign and security policy that could indeed contribute to peace and the protection of human rights. They did agree with the opposition on the necessity that the parliament should be informed sooner and more frequently. Yet they rejected the proposal of its participation in the decision-making on arms exports. The Left's and the SPD's accusations were rejected as political show. The SPD's discrepancy of actions in opposition and government was criticised explicitly (PP 17/219, 27083-85, 27094-96). According to the largest parliamentary group the debate was noticeably short of new arguments. Arms exports would always be the result of sober and realistic weighting of interests and values (PP 17/219, 27101-04). In line with the responsible Committee's recommendation (DS 17/12098) and by means of the governmental parties' majority, the petitions by both the SPD and B90G were rejected.¹¹

Apart from the fact that the debate had shifted away from the foreign policy side of arms exports and towards the domestic German politics side of it, arguments had not changed. The parliamentarians of the governmental coalition did support calls for timelier information of parliament. They did, nevertheless, support trust in the government's alleged decisions and rejected the condemnation of arms exports as such. In doing so,

¹⁰For the years 2004 to 2011, CRS lists Germany on 4th place for arms shipments. See CRS 2012, 76. Compare the more benevolent view on CRS statistics as opposed to data by SIPRI in BMWi 2012, 34.

¹¹In the case of the SPD's petition, the Left sided with the governmental parties as the petition did not ask for a ban on arms exports. B90G's petition was supported by all opposition parties.

they clearly affiliated themselves with putative policy *C*.

7.2 Media coverage in 2013

In 2013, media coverage of German arms exports appeared to be less prominently. Most of the countries mainly affected by the MENA uprisings had returned to some type of calm, however precarious. In a way, the civil war in Syria had become a familiar notion, a chaotic yet constant news topic. Just like the Bundestag had not seen any heated debate surrounding a single case of arms export into that region, the media seemed to have gained in routine.

Taz covered the release of new figures by SIPRI regarding arms exports. According to those Germany had exported fewer arms from 2008 to 2012 but still retained its third position in the world (taz 18.03.2013). Moreover, it reported that arms exports to Qatar would be more extensive than what had been known until then. This concession by the Federal Ministry for Economy Affairs followed an interpellation by the Left (taz 26.04.2013). In what could be called a rather balanced coverage, *taz* interviewed *Georg Adamowitsch*, managing director of the BDSV, in April. He rejected the existence of a *Merkel doctrine* and a rise of arms exports to the Arabian peninsula. However, he expressed his willingness to seek dialogue with politics and media (taz 17.04.2013). *Taz* then covered the release of the new *Schwarzbuch Waffenhandel* in June. This book is a respected resource on German arms exports, authored by *Jürgen Grässlin*, possibly the most important private arms opponent in Germany (taz 04.06.2013). In late August, about three weeks before election day, *taz* interviewed MdB *Gabriel*, the SPD's chairman. He emphasised the new level which the current government had allegedly reached by selling MBTs to Saudi Arabia. MdB *Gabriel* expressed his will to return to a more restrictive handling of arms exports and ban exports of small arms into certain countries. He did so under the assumption of a government consisting of SPD and B90G (taz 30.08.2013a). Most interestingly, *taz* cited a political scientist who held that the likely termination of the 2011 MBT trade reported in July was actually a hoax. He assumed it had been intentionally spread by KMW, the main company producing the Leopard MBTs, to pressurise the federal government into concluding the deal. However, the expert did not expect any decision before election day (taz 30.08.2013b)

Welt reported the extension of the arms deal with Qatar that had been released to the public following an interpellation by the Left (Welt 27.04.2013). It furthermore reported the apparent canceling of the MBT deal first covered in July 2011. The Saudi Arabian government had been reportedly upset by the critical reactions in Germany and had doubts whether the middle-sized company KMW could even handle such a huge deal. Instead, the country was now intensively negotiating a deal with American company *General Dynamics* (Welt 12.07.2013). In early August, it covered the MBT deal with Indonesia to which the federal government had reportedly granted permission (Welt 05.08.2013). At the same time, *Welt* reported on the federal government's extensive arms export permissions to Qatar during 2013 thus far. MdB *van Aken* was cited with the expression of discontent regarding Chancellor *Merkel*, stating that she was on the way of becoming *the best friend of the*

gulf's despots. According to him, Chancellor *Merkel's* actions gave the impression that the MENA uprisings had never happened (Welt 07.08.2013).

In general, *Handelsblatt* covered the matter of arms exports in general and arms exports to the MENA region in particular in the greatest detail. Whether one can see this as an indicator that arms exports are by default seen as a business issue rather than a matter of foreign policy is debatable. In April, *Handelsblatt* equally covered the sealing of a deal between KMW and Qatar, citing the company itself. It moreover added critical comments by the Left and B90G while it did not cite any criticism from the SPD in that same instance. Only days later it cited the responsible Ministry's confirmation of the trade, following the Left's respective interpellation (HB 18.04.2013, 26.04.2013). It is remarkable how this official confirmation went by largely unnoticed in comparison to the uproar of July 2011 regarding an unconfirmed trade. In May, *Handelsblatt* reported on the rise in German exports of small arms (HB 27.05.2013). In June, it covered a confirmed trade by Rheinmetall regarding Leopard II components with an unidentified *Arabian customer*, owing to the secrecy in the business (HB 18.06.2013). *Handelsblatt* furthermore reported on the government's confirmation of an arms trade with Indonesia and again confirming the trade with Qatar, answering an interpellation by B90G (HB 05.08.2013¹²) To this article the newspaper followed up with a concise report of the general boom of German arms exports into the gulf states. It explicitly mentioned Qatar and Saudi Arabia as the top German customers. Again, it cited criticisms by the Left and B90G but not by the SPD (HB 07.08.2013).

Despite Saudi Arabia's position as the second most important customer to the German arms industry in the region, *Handelsblatt* had reported on difficulties a month prior: *Handelsblatt* declared the MBT deal that had sparked so much controversy two years before as almost certainly cancelled. While the BSR intended to postpone the decision until after election day in September, the Saudi Arabian government had reportedly lost its patience after two years. According to *Handelsblatt*, it was close to sealing a deal with American company *General Dynamics*. Two days later, *Handelsblatt* cited the discontent of politicians of the governmental coalition regarding the opposition's joy in the failing trade. MdB *Martin Lindner* of the FDP criticised *naïve do-gooders in Germany* who took joy in the failure of a deal that was in Germany's political and economic interest. MdB *Florian Hahn* of the CSU emphasised that Saudi Arabia would receive MBTs after all, albeit American ones. The deal's failure would only harm German influence on the country, their economic partnership and jobs in Germany (HB 12.07.2013, 14.07.2013).

7.3 February 2013 until election day, 22nd of September 2013

The preceding debate had taken place on the 31st of January in 2013. In the still almost eight months remaining until federal election day on the 22nd of September, the issue of Germany's arms exports never did feature as prominently again in parliament. The government's handling of arms exports was still mentioned. However, it was never discussed again in a thorough way. Instead, opposition parties mentioned the issue in passing,

¹²While the article in *Handelsblatt* cites an interpellation (Anfrage) by the Green Party as reason of the confirmation, it was actually a written question (Schriftliche Frage), a different parliamentary tool. See DS 17/13394, 49-52.

especially arms exports to countries of the MENA region, in more or less related topics. Above all the by then infamous, purported MBT deal with Saudi Arabia first covered in 2011 almost became a mere rhetorical device to which parliamentarians of the governmental coalition did not even react anymore.

Only a few of those respective debates took place during a plenary session. One was the plenary debate on the deployment of German military personnel for the purpose of training the armed forces of Mali on the 20th of February. B90G referenced the purported purchase of Leopard II MBTs by Qatar. According to the party, Qatar was rumored to finance some of the groups against which the international community intervened in Mali in early 2013 (PP 17/221, 27462). The party made the same reference again in early June in another debate, citing exports to Saudi Arabia and Qatar as evidence that foreign policy had turned into industry politics (PP 17/244, 30876-77). A third case was the discussion of the federal government's annual disarmament report for the year 2012. On the same occasion a range of petitions by the opposition on the status of nuclear arms in Germany and on a global level was discussed. It took place on the 15th of March 2013. In it, B90G criticised the government's approach to supply arms to certain states, regardless of their respective human rights record. This approach, taken in order to avoid the need of interventions with own personnel, was deemed *wrong* and *thoroughly dangerous* (PP 17/229, 28662). On the 14th of June 2013 a discussion of the continuation of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) after 2015 took place. The Left condemned the export of small arms into crisis-stricken regions and developing countries, again calling them the *weapons of mass destruction of the 21st century*. It explicitly criticised Germany's role in it and accused the governmental parties' petition regarding the MDGs' continuation as *vague, superficial and garnished with many nice words* (PP 17/247, 31753).

The topic of arms exports and Germany's share in them was brought up several more times during the first half of 2013. In a debate on the 14th of March the SPD petitioned to declare the two years of Germany as a non-permanent member of the UNSC as *negative* (DS 17/11576). The opposition parties criticised the government's efforts towards the international harmonisation of arms export regulations as insufficient. SPD and B90G, similar to 2011, passed further criticism regarding the German government's abstention in the UNSC's vote on Resolution 1973 on Libya in 2011 (PP 17/228, 28535-40). In line with the responsible Committee's recommendation (DS 17/12242) the petition was rejected. Furthermore, the topic shortly surfaced in discussions on intensifying cooperation with the People's Republic of China (PP 17/225, 28192), military research at German universities, development cooperation with fragile states, the protection of Syrian refugees (PP 17/231, 28947, 28949, 28971, 29001) and the export of surveillance and censorship technology to authoritarian states (PP 17/240, 30507). Early June would have seen the discussion of several petitions dealing with various cases pertaining to arms exports. Among them was the decision on the Left's petition mentioned in section 7.1 which was, like the other petitions, subsequently rejected (PP 17/244, 31078-83). All examples given in this paragraph have one thing in common: these debates were directly taken into protocol, thus none of them took place in front of a public audience and in front of cameras in the plenary session. Moreover, with exception of the last debate, references to arms exports were always made by MdBs of the opposition parties, never by those of the governmental parties.

The overall rather calm situation regarding the debate of German arms exports in parliament is mirrored in the opposition's interpellations to the federal government. In mid-February, the Left inquired about respective, recent exports to Algeria and referenced the *REB* in doing so. Among many other questions, the party provocatively asked whether Algeria was one of the countries that Germany sought to strengthen militarily under its alleged new foreign policy (see section 6.1). *refer to chapter* The government's answer did not defer to that but instead cited, not surprisingly, the *PolG* and *EU CP 2008/944/CFSP* (DS 17/12388, 17/12802). In a similar way, the Left inquired about German supplies for Egyptian light wheeled tanks (LWTs). Some of the questions reached far into the past and way beyond the MENA uprisings (DS 17/13184, 17/13443). The Left followed up by asking the government about the reexport of German arms from other countries. It cited the possible export of Leopard II MBTs by the Netherlands to Saudi Arabia as an example. The government provided a list of Dutch applications for reexport but denied knowledge of this exact trade (DS 17/13692, 17/14033). In a similar vein, the party inquired about reports that the government had denied export of German components, needed by French arms manufacturers for an order to Saudi Arabia. According to the reports, concerns over the Saudi Arabia's autocratic regime had been the reason for the denial. The components were subsequently exported after French politicians had intervened. The Left referenced earlier alleged German arms exports to Saudi Arabia and the inherent discrepancy between these cases (DS 17/14494). The government emphasised Saudi Arabia's role as an important regional partner and otherwise pointed to corporate secrecy (DS 17/14657).

As in 2011, the Left was not the sole opposition party to address the issue of German arms exports in interpellations. On the 12th of June, the SPD requested information of the EC's preparation for its meeting in December 2013 for further development of its CFSP. Particularly it asked about the German government's preparatory efforts. It inquired whether the government deemed it wise to compensate for the declining European arms market by increased exports to third countries. Furthermore, the SPD asked whether the government intended to campaign on European level for a more restrictive handling arms exports as well as more transparency and parliamentary control (DS 17/13987, 3). The government replied once more by referring to the *PolG* and *EU CP 2008/944/CFSP*. Thus it deemed the SPD's concerns to be already covered in current legislation (DS 17/14290, 6-7).

Apart from this one interpellation all others were raised by the Left. The apparent tendency that only the Left did not reduce its activity on the topic while election day drew closer is affirmed by the last two interpellations on the issue before election day. On the 13th of August, the Left inquired about the government's promotion of arms exports and the perceived influence of lobbyism (DS 17/14563).¹³ In its answer, the government interpreted the danger of lobbyists' influence as effectively in check (DS 17/14756). On the 23rd of August, the party inquired about the sale of German Leopard MBTs to countries of the Middle East and other countries (DS 17/14628). The government did not answer several of the interpellation's single questions pointing to the limited amount of time available in answering to an interpellation. It did however provide several tables presenting most of the

¹³Similar questions had been raised by the Left in an earlier interpellation three weeks prior. See interpellation DS 17/14426 and answer 17/14653.

export history of the Leopard MBT. Even though the answer may not have been what the Left had hoped for, the motive of the interpellation's date seems clear. The federal government usually has 14 days to reply to an interpellation while that deadline is de facto often extended (DB 2011). In connection with the interpellation dating to one month before election day, the Left was quite likely hoping for an answer just before it. The government obliged and answered on the 11th of September 2013 (DS 17/14736). The first interpellation in this paragraph was answered on the 16th of September. This apparent unwillingness of the Left to let the topic rest prior to election day can also be seen in the plenary assembly.

The Bundestag's last plenary before election day was held on the 3rd of September 2013. Top candidates including Chancellor *Merkel*, a Federal Minister, leaders of parliamentary groups and secretary generals of several parties debated *on the situation in Germany*. They debated nothing less than the past four years and the outlook for the future of Germany. MdB *Katrin Göring-Eckhardt*, together with MdB *Trittin* one of two top candidates of B90G, mentioned her party's intention to enact a ban on arms exports to dictatorships. She did not go into any further detail. MdB *Gysi*, head of the Left's parliamentary group, addressed the topic more thoroughly. He pointed to a fundamental divide drawn by Germany's *extensive* arms exports. In line with his criticism in January 2013 he argued:

*“Die Waffenexporte haben alle Regierungen genehmigt: Kohl, Schröder, Merkel. Ihre vier Fraktionen stehen für die Erlaubnis von Waffenexporten. Wir stellen uns dagegen. Wir meinen, wir müssen nicht der drittgrößte Waffenexporteur der Welt sein. Nach 1945 hätten wir auch sagen können: Wir wollen nie wieder an Kriegen verdienen. Wer Waffen verkauft, muss wissen: Jede Waffe findet ihren Krieg.”*¹⁴

MdB GREGOR GYSI, on the 3rd of September 2013

With this statement, less than three weeks before election day, MdB *Gysi* set his party clearly apart from all competing parties in parliament. This included the governmental parties CDU/CSU and FDP and the opposition parties SPD and B90G alike (PP 17/253, 32638-39, 32642). Relating back to section 3.4, the Left effectively became $P_{2.2}$. Even before but especially that shortly prior to elections, the Left could rest assured that it would not reach governmental responsibility, since it had a low $\beta_{2.2}$. Already in late 2012, *Spiegel Online* had called the Left *the loneliest party of Germany* for SPD and B90G would not respond to its advances regarding a future coalition. None of the possible future governmental coalitions discussed back then included the Left (Spiegel 30.11.2012). Chairwoman *Katja Kipping* stated that the Left would immediately participate in a government if a range of conditions was fulfilled, among them the strict rejection of any arms exports (Welt 2013.05.24). In August 2013, just weeks before *Gysi's* speech, he had expressed that the SPD would never be able to provide the Federal Chancellor without the Left (Bild 04.08.2013). The relationship of the Left to the

¹⁴The quotation in my own translation: “All governments permitted arms exports: Kohl, Schröder, Merkel. Your four parliamentary groups represent the permission of arms exports. We oppose that. We think that we do not have to be the world's third-largest exporter of arms. After 1945 we could also have said: never again do we want to profit from wars. Who sells arms needs to know: every weapon finds its war.”; while *Kohl* and *Merkel* belong to the CDU, *Schröder* was the latest Chancellor of the SPD. This already covers all parties that have ever provided a head of government in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.

two other left-wing parties was still unclear. In early August, some leading members wished to make a decision on whether or not to support a possible SPD/B90G minority government. Such a decision was not taken and the situation remained unresolved. The Left was still offering its participation in a coalition with the SPD and B90G. This, however, was explicitly rejected by the other two parties due to the Left's allegedly dubious policies regarding social and financial issues (Spiegel 2013a, 2013b). Without any realistic chance to secure g but most of all due to a low $\beta_{2,2}$, the Left had no reason for restraint in criticism on the government. It could thus try to still secure $+a_{2,2}$, while the fact it never sold arms itself made it less susceptible to suffering $-d_{2,2}$.

B90G and SPD could reasonably attach a higher value to $\beta_{2,x}$ through better coalition prospects. They were thus both incarnations of $P_{2,1}$. Resulting from this was the incentive to reduce criticism of C to not endanger their greater chances of reaching governmental responsibility. This undoubtedly holds more for the SPD than for B90G. CDU/CSU and SPD had governed in a coalition from 2005 to 2009 with a high degree of continuity in personnel until 2013.¹⁵ Moreover, B90G was politically more distant from the governing parties which made a coalition less likely. Its middle position between SPD and the Left in apparent chances to achieve governmental responsibility was mirrored in its middle position regarding intensity of criticism. The relatively good prospects of the SPD were connected to the governmental coalition's situation.

While the opposition parties diversified their approach to the issue, the governmental parties equally refined their positions. This was exemplified on the 18th of September 2013, mere days before election day. On this day *Spiegel Online* reported about a position paper by the CDU/CSU and its repercussions. In the paper, MdBs of these parties called for more self-confidence in the export of German arms in the future – explicitly also against resistance in media and society. As *Spiegel Online* reported, Minister *Westerwelle* (FDP) had been outraged by this paper, stating that rules for arms exports would remain as restrictive as they were. No change of these rules would be possible with his party in government, except for changes that would strengthen parliament. With these statements, Minister *Westerwelle* opened up the topic for the final days of campaigning, according to *Spiegel Online*. Apparently he sought to dissociate his party from the coalition partner (Spiegel 2013c).

Truly, the position of the FDP prior to elections seemed more than dire. For months the party's position in all representative surveys had ranged around 5%, most commonly fluctuating between 4% and 6%. Although it had recovered from an average closer to 4% early in 2013, it was still in grave danger (Wahlumfragen.org). A voter turnout of less than 5% on election day would mean that the FDP would not remain in parliament, let alone in the government. If the FDP missed re-entry into parliament, the CDU/CSU, by all means forecasted to remain the strongest parliamentary group, was likely to be in need of a new coalition partner. Of the parties being in parliament then, the SPD would be the most feasible. This was indubitably clear to the SPD long before the release of the position paper discussed in the preceding paragraph. Appeals by the FDP that some voters affiliated with CDU/CSU should cast their second vote for the FDP to ensure the re-entry of the CDU/CSU's preferred coalition partner had been rejected by Chancellor *Merkel* and other leading CDU/CSU personnel early on (Spiegel 2012d). *Spiegel Online* argued that Minister *Westerwelle* had clarified his advocacy

¹⁵The only other federal coalition between CDU/CSU dates back to 1966 to 1969 but is obviously of less argumentative power here.

of restrictive arms exports months before (Spiegel 2013c). However, the question arises whether his entry of this topic into the very final days of campaigning did not occur too late to have an impact.

As for the CDU/CSU, it seems hardly likely that it wanted its position paper to be leaked to the public so close to election day. Then again, the mere fact that it was authored during the weeks before the election and not shortly after, suggests another notion. Considering that such a paper could become public, its authoring prior to elections indicates the parties' confidence about their prospects to easily retain governmental responsibility.

7.4 Election day and aftermath

The final results of Germany's federal elections on the 22nd of September 2013 turned out to be nothing short of historical. The CDU/CSU won 41,5% of votes, missing absolute majority only closely. The SPD won 25,7% while the Left won 8,6% and B90G 8,4% respectively. The FDP, however, for the first time in history failed to make entry into parliament by winning only 4,8% of second votes (Bundeswahlleiter 2014). The CDU/CSU had lost its coalition partner and despite its own strength now had to look for a new partner among the three remaining, generally leftist parties in parliament. A coalition of these three leftist parties against CDU/CSU had been rendered impossible by the SPD's and B90G's strong announcements not to coalise with the Left. While exploratory talks between CDU/CSU and B90G soon ended negatively, the talks between CDU/CSU and SPD led to coalition negotiations. These dragged on for months, culminating in the SPD asking its members to approve of the resulting coalition contract. After a positive vote, Chancellor *Merkel's* new cabinet was eventually sworn into office on the 17th of December 2013. An updated version of table 4.2 can be found in table 7.2, including the results of the 2013 German federal elections.

The negotiations for a coalition contract were the subject of thorough media coverage. Of relevance here are these negotiations inasmuch as they pertain to future arms exports. The negotiations did indeed incorporate demands by parliamentarians of all parties for a faster information of parliament about arms exports. Furthermore, the *REB* was now to be released biannually and in a timelier fashion. However, this was judged to be of little impact as companies themselves would inform about finished trades for commercial purposes. The decisive event in the course of an arms trade was constituted by the preliminary requests by companies whether such a trade would be possible. These remained untouched by the envisaged changes. Thus, the parties would fail to introduce essential changes. The *PolG* and other documents meant to restrict arms exports would not be turned into binding laws and would thus remain without final leverage. Equally, the competencies of the BSR and its secrecy remained unchanged (HB 07.11.2013) *Die Zeit* concluded that the negotiating future coalition of CDU/CSU and SPD was about to *feign a reform of arms export policy* (Zeit 2013b).

The final coalition contract which was signed on the 16th of December 2013 contained exactly the points criticised in the media in November. A year's *REB* was now to be released before the following year's summer break. This has to be seen as a step forward, considering the report for 2011 was debated in parliament in January 2013. It also contained the notion that the federal government would immediately inform the German

Party	1998		2002		2005 ¹⁶		2009		2013	
CDU/CSU	35,1	245	38,5	248	35,2	226	33,8	239	41,5	311
FDP	6,2	43	7,4	47	9,8	61	14,6	93	4,8	–
SPD	40,9	298	38,5	251	34,2	222	23,0	146	25,7	193
B90G	6,7	47	8,6	55	8,1	51	10,7	68	8,4	63
Left	5,1	36	4,0	2	8,7	54	11,9	76	8,6	64

Table 7.2: Election results of the main political parties in Germany from 1998 to 2013

This table illustrates the federal election results of the six parties which have been represented in parliament thus far in the elections from 1998 to 2013. The left-hand column of a year shows the result of a party regarding second votes. The second vote is considered the more important vote because it determines a party's share of seats in parliament whereas the first vote is a winner-takes-it-all vote in a certain constituency depending on where a voter is registered. Accordingly, the right-hand column of a year shows the number of a party's seats in parliament in the subsequent legislative period. Parties forming the government in a subsequent legislative period are highlighted in grey. For references see Bundeswahlleiter 2014.

parliament about final export decisions taken in the BSR. The new government announced to campaign for harmonisation of European arms export guidelines (CDU, CSU, SPD 2013, 13). Parliamentary participation in decision-making as envisioned by opposition parties in the debates of July 2011 was by no means part of the contract. Despite its shortcomings, the contract did indeed amount to humble progress in comparison to the preceding government's coalition contract. The contract of 2009 had merely contained the announcements to continue to maintain the *responsible permission policy for the export of arms* and to campaign for harmonisation at EU-level (CDU, CSU, FDP 2009, 55-56, 125).

Another important event occurred in mid-November. On a party convention, the SPD decided to cease its fundamental opposition to a coalition with the Left. This was unanimously interpreted as a signal for the next federal elections in 2017. A leftist coalition of SPD, B90G and the Left could then, if it managed to overcome inner differences, end the CDU/CSU's tenure which will have lasted 12 years by then (Tagesspiegel 2013, Zeit 2013a).

In July 2014, SPD party chairman MdB *Gabriel* who had become Federal Minister of Economic Affairs and Energy provoked alienation in the governmental coalition. In an effort to live up to earlier positions, he sought to handle German arms exports into critical regions more restrictively which was met with criticism by CDU and CSU. The SPD's coalition partners pointed to the German arms industry needed to maintain Germany's self-sufficiency in military supplies. Thus the matter would eventually touch on Germany's security interests. *Zeit* analysed that arms export policy had turned into a performance test for Minister *Gabriel*. He had propagated a more restrictive interpretation of the guidelines for so long that it was impossible for him now to settle for anything less, despite the fact his party did not address the issue much the year before. The Left would keep his performance under close scrutiny (Spiegel 2014b, Welt 28.07.2014, Zeit 2014b).

¹⁶The elections of 2005 were early elections.

Another remarkable event had occurred in that same month. On the 1st of July, arms manufacturer Rheinmetall announced that former Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development *Dirk Niebel* (FDP) would join the company in support of its executive board (Rheinmetall 2014), beginning on the 1st of January 2015.¹⁷ Several media actors called his future position the *top lobbyist* of Rheinmetall (FAZ 2014, SZ 2014a). Due to his membership in the BSR from 2009 to 2013 the information caused thorough discussion (Spiegel 2014a). Criticism from the governmental opposition was bold and even the SPD, now in government, attested a lack of instinct. The move gave new impetus to a long-lasting discussion of former politicians changing into positions in business soon after they have left office (Thomson Reuters Foundation 2014).

In October 2014, Minister *Gabriel* informed the parliament about the latest export decisions by the BSR. Among the recipients of small arms, armored vehicles and other goods were Qatar, Algeria, the UAE and Saudi Arabia. The parliamentary opposition judged that Minister *Gabriel* had yielded to the arms lobby (Zeit 2014c). Later that month, the Federal Constitutional Court in Karlsruhe published its decision on B90G's constitutional challenge from July 2011. While it found that the government needed to inform in a timelier manner about its decisions it did not decide in favour of the challenge's core demand. The BSR's secrecy was legal and to be maintained in order to ensure the separation of powers (Bundesverfassungsgericht 2014). In line with its coverage discussed earlier, *taz* called this verdict a *clear defeat for democracy and public* in that parliamentarians would only be left with the option to *nag afterwards* (taz 2014.10.21).

¹⁷It is conceivable that an active politician who pursued policies beneficial to a certain company while in office had prospects of later employment at that company in mind. Then, said employment would surely constitute a personal gain, even if a less obvious one. Personal future prospects of employment could be added to the parts which constitute *g*. In a similar case, *MdB von Kladden*, mentioned in section 6.3, did not run as a candidate for parliament in the 2013 elections anymore. Instead, he went on to become the top lobbyist of *Daimler AG*, a German automotive corporation. This move was accompanied by investigations regarding accepting advantage. See Spiegel 2013e.

Chapter 8

Conclusions

A two-part conclusion to this thesis is appropriate. I first discuss the most important results of the case study and the virtues and flaws of my model. In doing so I identify the underlying patterns which allow for conclusions regarding the larger picture – the prospects of changing unpopular but marginal policies. I then discuss these in the second subsection, along with suggestions for further research.

8.1 Results of the case study

Half a year into the MENA uprisings, the German government's alleged preliminary approval of the export of 200 Leopard II A7+ MBTs to Saudi Arabia caused a heated debate in July 2011. The three opposition parties attacked the government over this decision. The government, in turn, never broke its silence. Besides demanding the cancellation of this deal, the three parties emphasised different aspects in their criticism. SPD and B90G demanded the return to the strict application of a set of rules for arms exports which the government of CDU/CSU and FDP allegedly had broken. The Left was more uncompromising in its demands, even arguing for the ban of arms exports altogether. Since they all vividly applied their criticism during July 2011, they can be identified as a still unitary P_2 . Nevertheless, my model turned out to be overly simple here in that it did not account for the already differing degrees of criticism that the opposition parties applied. A model representing different kinds of criticism could be worth devising.

The federal government could afford to remain silent for mainly two reasons. On the one hand, its parliamentary groups (CDU/CSU, FDP) defended its decision-making processes and Saudi Arabia as a beneficiary that remained hypothetical all the way. They furthermore ensured to remind SPD and B90G of own arms exports during their time in government. Hence, these two opposition parties could not only attack but also had to defend themselves. On the other hand, the issue eventually lost in prominence, even though sometimes even the governmental parties in parliament cautiously joined the opposition in demands for more transparency of arms export decisions. Thus, the government P_1 was able to largely sit out the debate. This was the case despite

extensive media coverage. Media bias was observed, regardless of overall criticism, in that certain media actors emphasized certain aspects of the debate, apparently depending on political leaning. The media did cover the issue in 2011, yet did not enter it into the discussion apart from acute, high-profile cases such as the one of July 2011. Prior to the 2013 elections the media did not problematise the issue again. This finding does not suggest the media as an independent formulator of foreign policy.

Prior to the federal elections of September 2013, party strategies changed. While there was, admittedly, no unexpected high-profile case in discussion like in July 2011, one fact proves insightful. Despite earlier grave criticism two out of three opposition parties chose not to make arms exports a campaigning issue. With widespread silence on the issue in the months and weeks prior to election day, SPD and B90G qualified as $P_{2,1}$. Both had somewhat realistic chances ($\beta_{2,1}$) of achieving governmental responsibility. As a consequence they had 1) the chance of coming to enjoy g , economic, security and lobbyism turnout of supporting arms exports to authoritarian regimes. Possibly even more important, however, was 2) the possibility of simply avoiding possible damages $-d_{2,1}$ to their chances of achieving incumbency. These would likely have arisen if they had problematised the issue, due to their vulnerability mentioned above. Another possible reason for the parties' reluctance to problematise the issue needs to be noted, especially because it is not represented in my model. Both parties were likely aware of 3) the issue's marginal nature and did not deem problematising it worthwhile in comparison with other more prominent issues of the 2013 elections. Whatever the exact reason is, it kept the parties from introducing the issue into their campaigns. It needs to be noted that B90G's chances were arguably dim, yet, as opposed to the Left, they were not non-existent. Both its chances for government and the degree of its criticism in 2013 puts B90G between SPD and the Left. As for the Left, apart from clear prospects to remain in the opposition, it had the additional perk that it had never been in government and thus had never sold arms itself. It thus was the only party which remained vocal about the issue and subsequently took the position of $P_{2,2}$, emphasising its role as the sole fundamental opponent of arms exports.

In this situation it was easy for the CDU/CSU to ignore the Left's use of the issue as it was not a realistic contender for future incumbency. The sister parties thus remained steadfast as $P_{1,1}$. The FDP remained alongside its coalition partner most of the time. Close to elections the possibility of failing to re-enter parliament became ever more threatening. The FDP then distanced itself from its coalition partner in reaction to efforts by the CDU to liberalise arms exports. In doing so, it became $P_{1,2}$, albeit too late to have a positive effect. This finding clearly seems too weak though to confirm the existence of $P_{1,2}$. Possibly, another more prominent issue would have made the FDP seek distinction from CDU/CSU earlier.

Summing up, the issue of arms exports to authoritarian regimes is surrounded by a constellation of interests and strategies that makes change unlikely. Both the government of CDU/CSU and FDP and the majority of opposition parties (SPD, B90G) had incentives to remain largely silent on the issue prior to elections. Yet this is the time when staunch criticism could actually make a difference by affecting voting decisions. It would thus be interesting to look at civil society efforts to establish the issue among the parties. Apparently any such efforts were not successful in 2013. In line with parties' own criticism, they may have found more responsiveness with

political parties in 2011. Thus a comparison could prove insightful here as well. Equally, a take on the scenario with more extensive source material and a greater scope could possibly yield further support for my results.

Although the SPD in 2014 tried to live up to part of its criticism directed at the federal government in 2011, changes so far seem few and humble. Besides a timelier release of the *REB* no changes were made. Inclusion of parliament in the process, one of the most prominent demands by opposition parties in 2011, is nowhere close to be realised. Parliament will be informed earlier in the future but still only after final decisions have already been made. Hence, nothing will prevent similarly controversial decisions from occurring in the future. This finding holds even if the particular Leopard 2 A7+ MBT trade of July 2011 may not happen after all, possibly so that the SPD now governing can save face.

It is yet to be seen what will happen in the elections of 2017. The SPD will presumably have opened up further to the possibility of a coalition with the Left, the party most critical and vocal about any arms exports. Civil society efforts may have more of an impact then if a real chance arises to break the alleged “grand coalition of arms exports” that the Left claimed to have identified. So far for the voter, arms exports seem to be an obscure sub-topic of the equally obscure sphere of foreign policy that has no considerable impact on one’s retrospective voting decision. In contrast to domestic issues, such considerations do indeed remain *foreign*, even more so if political actors do not introduce them into their election platforms.

8.2 Unpopular but marginal issues

This thesis has found that political parties, both incumbent and in the opposition, may strategically refrain from problematising a certain issue during electoral campaigning. This may happen despite earlier vocal criticism. In doing so, political parties and camps can conclude an armistice on certain issues. This is rational if the involved political parties agree that the issue is too unpopular and hence unlikely to yield a turnout worthy problematising it.

An electorate making its individual voting decisions retrospectively is then left to its own devices to make the unpopular issue a substantial factor in these decisions. The decision between an unpopular policy C and the popular alternative D needs to be made together with the decision on any other issue $A \vee B$ or even set of issues. If in comparison the dichotomy $C \vee D$ is considered to be of marginal importance by an individual voter it is unlikely to influence the subsequent voting decision.

In consequence, all players acting in accordance with their individual best interest can indeed perpetuate an unpopular policy C . Political actors seem to be aware of this situation, thus excluding an issue from campaigning to keep awareness of it as low as possible. Eventually, it seems to be political parties who are the decisive players in shaping the public discourse prior to elections. Unless a contender for office chooses D as a major concern, other actors will have to try and exert influence on decision-makers. The case study suggested limited potential for the media to fill this gap. Possibly, civil society could succeed in wresting credible promises for reform from selected contenders. In fact, the leverage of civil society to make contenders problematise an issue needs to be

put under scrutiny. It seems to be one thing to make a contender campaign on an issue the contender did not care about. This may well be a wholly different thing regarding an issue that a contender deliberately avoids.

Clearly, more research is to be done. My main finding was that political parties may conclude an armistice on an unpopular issue that none of them deem worthwhile to campaign on, for differing reasons. In my case study this finding still seemed to hold if not all but still a majority of political parties have an incentive to avoid the issue. This conclusion should neither be limited to the case at hand nor to the German scenario. As an example of another issue that could fit the description of an unpopular but marginal issue is Germany's non-ratification of the *UN Convention against Corruption*. Although Germany signed it already in 2003, as of the 5th of September 2014 it remains as the last state in the EU and most of Europe to not have ratified the treaty (UNODC 2014). Politicians often defended this with the time needed to harmonise the treaty with existing German law while critics emphasised the treaty's inconvenience for politicians' additional incomes and perks. Common sense tells that large shares of the electorate might favour ratification while politicians have an interest in non-ratification if no further consequences are impending. This could be another promising case study concerning Germany.

One should be able to find equally unpopular but marginal issues in other polities. Quite possibly, the opposition will follow the same pattern of criticism in the midst of the legislative period and reluctance prior to elections. If this pattern can be rediscovered in diverse scenarios, a more comprehensive conclusion could be drawn. Agreement of political parties to ignore a particular topic would amount to a certain degree of immobility in the democratic process. Marginal yet largely unpopular policies could become entrenched against the will of the majority. This would effectively constitute a blind spot of retrospective voting and, in this respect, render public opinion powerless. More generally, it would constitute a shortcoming of democracy.

Appendix A

Acronyms

AA	Auswärtiges Amt, <i>engl. Federal Foreign Office</i>
AU	African Union
AI	Amnesty International, <i>a non-governmental organisation</i>
AL	Arab League
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier, <i>a type of armoured vehicle</i>
ATT	Arms Trade Treaty
AVG	Außenwirtschaftsgesetz, <i>engl. Foreign Trade Law</i>
AWV	Außenwirtschaftsverordnung, <i>engl. Foreign Trade Regulation</i>
BAFA	Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle, <i>engl. Federal Office of Economics and Export Control</i>
BDSV	Bundesverband der Deutschen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsindustrie e.V., <i>engl. Federal Association of the German Security and Defence Industry</i>
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
BITS	Berliner Informationszentrum für Transatlantische Sicherheit, <i>engl. Berlin Information-center for Transatlantic Security, a private, non-governmental research institute</i>
BMJV	Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz, <i>engl. Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection</i>
BMVg	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, <i>engl. Federal Ministry of Defence</i>

APPENDIX A. ACRONYMS

BMW	Bayerische Motoren Werke, <i>a German automobile and engine manufacturer</i>
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie, <i>engl. Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy</i>
BMWi	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, <i>engl. Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Technology</i>
BR	Bundesregierung, <i>engl. Federal Government of the Federal Republic of Germany</i>
BSR	Bundessicherheitsrat, <i>engl. Federal Security Council, a governmental body that among other matters takes the most controversial arms export decisions</i>
B90G	Bündnis '90/Die Grünen, <i>engl. Alliance '90/The Greens, political party in Germany</i>
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, <i>engl. Christian Democratic Union in Germany, political party in Germany</i>
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CP	Common Position
CRS	Congressional Research Service, <i>a governmental research institute</i>
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern, <i>engl. Christian-Social Union in Bavaria, political party in Bavaria with influence on federal politics</i>
DB	Deutscher Bundestag, <i>the parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany</i>
DPG	Defence Policy Guidelines
DS	Drucksache, <i>engl. printed matter</i>
EADS	European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company, <i>a multinational aerospace and defence corporation</i>
EC	European Council
EU	European Union
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, <i>a German newspaper</i>
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei, <i>engl. Free Democratic Party, political party in Germany</i>
FFP	Fund for Peace, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
FGW	Forschungsgruppe Wahlen e.V., <i>a German election analysis institute</i>
FSA	Free Syrian Army, <i>largely secular rebel forces fighting the Syrian government since 2011</i>

FSI	Fragile States Index, <i>formerly the Failed States Index</i>
GG	Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, <i>engl. Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany, the country's constitution</i>
GPPI	Global Public Policy Institute, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
H&K	Heckler & Koch GmbH, <i>a German small arms manufacturer</i>
HB	Handelsblatt, <i>a German newspaper</i>
HRW	Human Rights Watch, <i>a non-governmental organisation</i>
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
IS	Islamic State, <i>an islamist militia primarily operating on the sovereign territory of Syria and Iraq</i>
IVW	Informationsgemeinschaft zur Feststellung der Verbreitung von Werbeträgern e.V., <i>engl. Information Community for the Assessment of Dissemination of Media</i>
KEK	Kommission zur Ermittlung der Konzentration im Medienbereich, <i>a commission tasked with the prevention of a dominant influence on public opinion by any media actor and the evaluation of viewer ratings.</i>
KMW	Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG, <i>a German arms manufacturer</i>
KWKG	Kriegswaffenkontrollgesetz, <i>officially short titled Gesetz über die Kontrolle von Kriegswaffen, engl. Law on the Control of Weapons of War</i>
Left	Die Linke, <i>engl. The Left, political party in Germany</i>
LWT	Light Wheeled Tank, <i>a type of armoured vehicle</i>
MBT	Main Battle Tank, <i>a type of armoured vehicle</i>
MdB	Mitglied des Bundestages, <i>engl. Member of Parliament</i>
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MENA	Middle East and North Africa, <i>a region generally considered to span from Morocco in the West to Iran in the East</i>
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NE	Nash equilibrium
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

APPENDIX A. ACRONYMS

PDS	Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus, <i>engl. Party of Democratic Socialism, political party in Germany, predecessor of the Left</i>
PolG	Politische Grundsätze der Bundesregierung für den Export von Kriegswaffen und sonstigen Rüstungsgütern, <i>engl. political guidelines of the federal government for the export of weapons of war and other armaments</i>
PP	Plenarprotokoll, <i>engl. plenary proceedings</i>
PRIF	Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
PRIO	Peace Research Institute Oslo, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
REB	Rüstungsexportbericht, <i>engl. Arms Export Report, the German federal government's report to public and parliament about the country's arms exports</i>
RM	Rheinmetall AG, <i>a German arms manufacturer</i>
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, <i>a non-governmental research institute</i>
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, <i>engl. Social Democratic Party of Germany, political party in Germany</i>
SWP	Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, <i>engl. German Institute for International and Security Affairs, a research and policy advice institute</i>
SZ	Süddeutsche Zeitung, <i>a German newspaper</i>
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
WB	Weißbuch, <i>engl. White Book, an official document detailing Germany's security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr, latest version from 2006</i>
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

Appendix B

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“Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

Frederick Douglass